

**ISAIAH 28-33**

**A LITERARY AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

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### Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work and that previously it has neither been submitted nor published elsewhere.

Martin J. O'Kane.  
June 1989.

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### ABSTRACT

Traditionally, in Isaianic studies, the aim of many commentators since the time of Duhm has been to try to rediscover the words of the eighth century prophet of Jerusalem. Descriptive words such as "authentic" and "secondary" betray the misconception that material which does not reach back to the time of the prophet is somehow less authentic and authoritative.

The present study follows more recent trends in looking at the Book of Isaiah as a literary whole and in arguing that each section must be understood and interpreted not only in the light of its immediate context but also in the light of its place and function within the entire book.

Six chapters (Isaiah 28-33) are analysed in two ways. Firstly the vocabulary is examined to establish linguistic and thematic similarities with other parts of the book and with the rest of the OT; secondly the many subsections within the six chapters are looked at contextually to determine how they relate to each other and consequently reveal a consistent and unified message.

The way in which the material is arranged in chs 28-33 to highlight various themes may be seen as a microcosm of what is happening throughout the entire book. One of the techniques used to actualize and unify composite traditions may be the concept of wisdom which seeks to instruct the reader in the way of righteousness.

This analysis of chs 28-33 complements a similar one carried out by Sweeney [1988] on chs 1-4. The conclusions, too, are similar in that both studies emphasize that any section of Isaianic material, large or small, only makes sense when looked at in the light of the entire book.



ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Assur Redaktion.
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . London: Oxford University Press, 1907.
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (Liber Jesaiae, 1968)</i> , edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt.
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i> .
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i> .
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament.
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i> .
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> .
<i>EvTh</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i> .
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i> .
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i> .
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i> .
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i> .
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> .
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> .
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i> .
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> .
JSOT Supp	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of the Old Testament.
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i> .
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> .
K	Kethibh.

KB	L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, <i>Lexicon in Vetus Testamenti</i> . Leiden: Brill, 1953.
LXX	Septuagint.
Mss	Manuscripts.
MT	Masoretic Text.
NEB	New English Bible.
<i>OT Studien</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i> .
Q	Qere.
RSV	Revised Standard Version.
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature.
<i>ScJTh</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i> .
Syr	Syriac Text of Isaiah.
TB	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i> .
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. [Translated from the German <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> , 1972.]
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i> .
THWAT	<i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . München: Kaiser Verlag, 1971.
TOB	<i>Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible</i> . Édition Intégrale. Ancien Testament. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1975.
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i> .
UF	<i>Ugarit Forschungen</i> .
Vulg	Vulgate.
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> .
VT Supp	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> .
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament.
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> .
1QIsa	The St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll from Qumran Cave 1.
1QIsb	The Hebrew University Scroll from Qumran 1.

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## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

## Introductory Chapter

EDITORIAL ACTIVITY IN FIRST ISAIAH

The influence of the traditional historical approach with its primary aim of rediscovering the *authentic* words of the prophet Isaiah, employed by scholars over the last century since the time of Duhm [1892], has been pervasive and far reaching in all aspects of the study of the book of Isaiah. Such influence is evident in subsequent exploration of quite particular themes within the book, e.g. the various "political" investigations carried out by Childs [1967], Dietrich [1976] and Gonçalves [1986]; the wisdom content investigated by Jensen [1973] and the work of Evans [1986] on the use of the David/Jerusalem traditions. These studies are examples of the wide shadow cast by the conventional historical approach; they proceed from the same premise that, unless effectively proven otherwise, the majority of passages in chs 1-35 stem from the prophet. Such a "prophet-centred" approach does little justice to the unity of the book and, as Clements [1980c: 435] points out, so long as the concern of the interpreters of Old Testament prophecy is tied to the *authentic* message of a religious individual, the question of the interconnectedness of the various parts of the book of Isaiah remains a mystery. With Carroll [1978: 304], Clements [1980c: 435] advocates a perspective that emphasizes the intrinsic unity of all sixty six chapters and calls for an approach that tries to discern the traces of a consistent and systematic process of redaction throughout the book.

Clements's direction, although gathering more support of late, is not entirely new. Since the pioneering work of Mowinckel [1933] on the redaction history of First Isaiah, a stream of scholars have made

attempts to recover the editorial process (1). The debate has been sustained in recent years not only in commentaries as disparate as Wildberger [1972, 1982] and Kaiser [1974, 1983] and in the particular studies of Barth [1977] and Vermeylen [1977] but also in shorter articles by scholars interested in how changes in the "context" of Isaianic traditions produced changes in their "meaning" for later readers (2). Carroll [1978: 302] speaks of the presence of slight shifts in emphasis in Isa chs 1-11 which reveal the re-interpretative process at work - a process which involves the juxtaposition of doom and salvation oracles and subtle changes introduced by semantic and interpolated verses. Many scholars consider that the key to understanding the complexities and ambiguities in First Isaiah lies in coming to terms with the substantial editorial work present in the book. If we can discover the motives of those behind the editorial process and pinpoint the time(s) in which they worked, we gain a clearer insight into the present arrangement of the oracles and of the book as a whole.

A common *point de départ* for investigations into editorial activity in First Isaiah has been the ambiguity inherent in the prophet's attitude towards Assyria. Carroll [1979: 144] summarizes the problem. On the one hand, Isaiah sees Assyria as the divine instrument appointed to punish the corrupt Judean nation (10:5-6): it is represented as a destructive force in 1:4-9; 22:1-4; 28:7-22; 29:13-14; 30:1-5; 31:1-3 (3). On the other hand, Isaiah promises a divine deliverance from Assyria in 10:5-15; 14:24-32; 17:12-14; 18:1-6; 29:1-8; 30:27-33; 31:4-9. Since Isaiah originally spoke of Assyria as the instrument in the hand of Yahweh for

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1. Becker [1968], Brodie [1979], Eaton [1959], Erlandsson [1970], Fohrer [1967b], Jones [1955], Liebrich [1956], Nickels [1977].
  2. Ackroyd [1974, 1977], Childs [1979], Clements [1982].
  3. Machinist [719-37] has shown from Akkadian texts how the image of Assyria in First Isaiah as a proud, belligerent nation was an image initially created by Assyria itself for its own propaganda.

punishing Judah, oracles predicting the destruction of Assyria are usually attributed either to a change in the message of the prophet [Huber 1976] or to a deliberate reworking of Isaiah's oracles in a later period. The most influential contribution to the debate in recent years has been that of Barth [1977] whose proposals have been accepted, with only minor modifications, in the commentary of Clements [1980a]. The section on Isaiah in the literary inquiry of Gonçalves [1986: 137-269] into the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 builds on his conclusions while Sheppard [1985] has sought to harmonize Barth's perspective with Childs's [1979] canonical approach to the book.

Barth [6-10] begins with the "Assyrian" texts of First Isaiah. He distinguishes between the *Assyrerreich* and *Assur* pericopes. The first group (1:4-8; 5:26-29; 6-8\*; 10:5-15\*; 14:28-32\*; 17:1-6,20; 22:1-14; 28:1-4; 28:7b-22; 30:8-17; 31\*; 32:9-14) refers to the Assyrian empire of the seventh and sixth centuries while the second group (10:23-25; 19:23-25; 23:1-14; 27:12f) refers to Assyria in a figurative or symbolic way. His method of analysis is consistent in each pericope: firstly he deals with textual and grammatical difficulties and then identifies the additions to the unit which he strips away in order to establish the original composition of the *Grundbestand*. He offers what, in his opinion, constitutes the original core and suggests how and why this core grew into the present text. As a result of his detailed analysis Barth [239-50] concludes that several of these texts date from the time of Josiah (640-609) and are evidence of an important edition of the book. He has mounted a detailed case for a late seventh century reinterpretation that introduced a message against Assyria into the original oracles of Isaiah. This redaction is given the name *Assur Redaktion* (AR) since its primary concern was to show that Yahweh, the God of Israel, would shortly overthrow the Assyrians by a major demonstration of his power. That this redaction took place during the



reign of Josiah is determined by two factors: firstly from the pericopes examined, Barth concludes [250] that Assyria has not yet fallen as a world power which means that such expectations belong to the period before the fall of Nineveh in 612. Secondly, the hope of the downfall of Assyria is strong and imminent. Judah has no longer anything to fear from Assyria (10:24-27; 30:27-33): this situation did not arise until the early years of Josiah's reign.

Barth's overall view [277-85] of how the book developed and reached its present state can be summarized briefly. Isaiah the prophet assembled two collections of his oracles, the *Denkschrift* of 6:1-8:18 and a collection of oracles in 28:7b-30:17 dating from 705-701. Both cores were added to so that by the middle of the seventh century the two nuclei had expanded to include 2:1a-11:5\* and 28:1-32:14\*. In the reign of Josiah, particularly in the years 621-616, a major redactional process totally transformed the two units. Firstly, they were joined together. Secondly, they were reinterpreted to adapt the teachings of the prophet to current times, in particular to the impending fall of Assyria and to the glorious reign of Josiah. The oracles of Isaiah concerning Assyria were commented upon and completed. From now on, they announce the destruction of Assyria and the salvation of Israel: any threat in the future is removed and the country will see an era of prosperity under the reign of a glorious king. Barth [285-301] assigns a large number of texts to this redaction. In some cases the AR editors worked upon traditional material, e.g. they added 14:5-6 to the already existing material 14:4b+7-20a. Similarly, they inserted other words of the prophet into the book at whatever points best suited their purpose, e.g. 14:28a,29,31-32; 17:1b-6; 18:1-6,20 are no longer in their original context.

The AR editors composed a considerable amount of original material. The following verses, according to Barth [311-36], are their absolute creation: 5:30; 7:20; 8:9-10; 10:16-19; 11:6-8; 14:24-27; 17:12-14; 28:23-29;

31:5+8b-9; 32:1-5,15-20. At the end of the AR edition, the bulk of the book as we know it had been formed stretching from 2:1a as far as 32:20. Exilic and post-exilic additions, while reasonably numerous, did not alter the basic structure of the book with the exception of the inclusion of the two apocalypses of chs 24-27 and 34-35.

Vermeeylen's criticism [1977: 25-26] that Barth builds his theory on much too narrow a base is valid. <sup>Fishy</sup> Even at the most basic level of textual and literary analysis of the *Assyrerreich* pericopes, the views Barth espouses are not shared by a general consensus of scholars so that <sup>the judgment about</sup> what constitute literary additions and what motivates them is to a certain extent subjective. Secondly, because he only analyzes passages relevant to Assyria, his synthesis [299-300, 311-336] introduces a number of new elements which are insufficiently controlled. It is hardly possible to understand a pericope which has been redacted without studying the entire book. Barth uses the method of *Redaktionsgeschichte* selectively only to discover the AR: he is not concerned with the influence that successive editing may have had on the book. It is difficult to be persuaded that we can actually weave our way back through subsequent redactions to discover evidence of a comprehensive pre-exilic edition of the book. Would not theological reflection on the historical event of the exile have taken precedence in later editing of the book? Would such a process of editing leave any pre-exilic arrangement of the book intact and recognizable? For example, Clements [1980c: 434] has argued that it was the fall of Jerusalem in 587 which was the decisive event in the reinterpretation of Isaiah's oracles and an event that prompted the later linking of the Assyrian (chs 1-39) with the Babylonian (chs 40-66) sections of the book. As a specific example he suggests [1980c: 424] that a series of sharply pointed threats against Jerusalem (2:6-4:1) has been intentionally surrounded by material of a reassuring nature (2:1-5 and 4:2-6). Older threatening prophecies have been brought forward so that

the book was given a dramatic introduction which contained the most explicit threats to Jerusalem in the light of 587. He argues that the section 2:6-4:1 was located in its present position after 587. Their intention is to show that a central part of the message of Isaiah was concerned with a divine warning to Judah and Jerusalem. Later post exilic redactors inserted words of hope in 2:1-4 and 4:2-6.

Taking into account objective historical criteria, Barth's system of dating [238] is quite plausible: the year 611 is the *terminus ad quem* of AR activity because although the threat of Assyria has passed, it has not yet fallen. However, it is questionable whether *every* anti-Assyrian bias should be attributed to a self-conscious editing process which took place in this historical period. In attributing such sophistication to this edition of the book there may be a tacit assumption that the age of Josiah was a golden age where literary activity flourished.

Vermeulen [1977: 693-709] sees the bulk of editorial work as coming from the hands of Deuteronomic editors in the exilic period. The majority of Isaiah's oracles and other authentic sayings come from the end of the eighth century and in particular date from the crisis of 705-701 [Vermeulen 688-92]. Towards the end of the <sup>seventh</sup> century in the reign of Josiah, he argues [655-71], the oracles were interpreted and completed in the light of the ancient belief of the absolute inviolability of Zion which was to be unconditionally protected by Yahweh. The Josianic redactors gave Isaiah's collection a strong messianic flavour - the poem in 9:1-6 is based on the figure of Josiah. But it was in exilic times that the oracles of<sup>1</sup> Isaiah, already worked upon by the Josianic redactors, were radically reinterpreted by editors who belonged to the Deuteronomic school. Similar redactional work from the same period is evident in the historical books, the so-called Deuteronomic History, and in the prophets Jeremiah, Amos and Micah [Vermeulen 702].

After the exile, First Isaiah was the object of several editings [Vermeylen 711-21]. The first emanated from the priestly milieu at the start of the fifth century. They were responsible for dividing the work into three parts:

- (a) the fate of Jerusalem and Judah (chs 1-12).
- (b) the fate of the pagan world (chs 13-27).
- (c) the triumph of Israel (chs 28-33).

In this redaction, the eschatological perspective is accentuated: the people wait for divine intervention which will rescue them from the yoke of the pagans. The second post-exilic redaction reflects the preoccupations of the group of pious Jews gathered around the Temple in Jerusalem, in the second half of the fifth century [Vermeylen 723-43]. The community is anxious, conscious both of its efforts to be faithful and disorientated by the delay in salvation. First Isaiah is reinterpreted to show that the delay in salvation is due to the fact that the fidelity of the group is not yet perfect: the community is urged to recognize its sin and implore pardon.

Vermeylen's approach has the advantage of positing several redactions within the development of the book, thus respecting the complexity of images, allusions and language. The present shape of the book is not attributed to one specific group as in Barth's hypothesis. He has an advantage over Barth in that his study includes chs 1-35 so that his views are based on and supported by a broad consistent interpretation of all the material involved and not merely selected pericopes as in the case of Barth.

Displacement of Material

A specific example of editorial activity in First Isaiah is the displacement of material: 10:1-4a from 5:8-24 and 5:25-30 from 9:7-20. In the first instance, there is a series of seven woes pronounced against the leaders and rulers of Jerusalem and it is likely that they originally formed part of a single connected series. Duhm [35] followed by Marti [101] and Gray [234] explained their separation as due to a measure of accidental fragmentation and scattering. Barth [110-17] sees the dislocation as intentional: 5:8-24 has been lifted out of its original position in order to place it before the account of the prophet's call in 6:1ff. The threat pronounced by Isaiah against the ruling classes in Jerusalem has been given a new prominence and a new relevance, by setting it along with other threats to Jerusalem (2:6-22; 3:1-12) and before the prophetic call in 6:1ff. Kaiser [1983: 6], on the other hand, argues that the purpose of 5:24-30 is to mark off clearly the content of the first five chapters from what follows: it gives chs 1-5 an appropriate conclusion and invests the entire section with a new eschatological significance.

' The fact that the refrain

"For all this his anger is not turned away  
and his hand is stretched out still."

occurs in 5:25; 9:12,17,21; 10:4 (1) suggests a connection between 5:25-30 and 9:7-20. (NEB attempts to rectify the error by placing 5:24-25 after 10:4). Duhm [40] and Marti [96] regarded the dislocation as the result of an unintentional fragmentation of the material during the course of transmission and editing. The fragmentation was occasioned by the

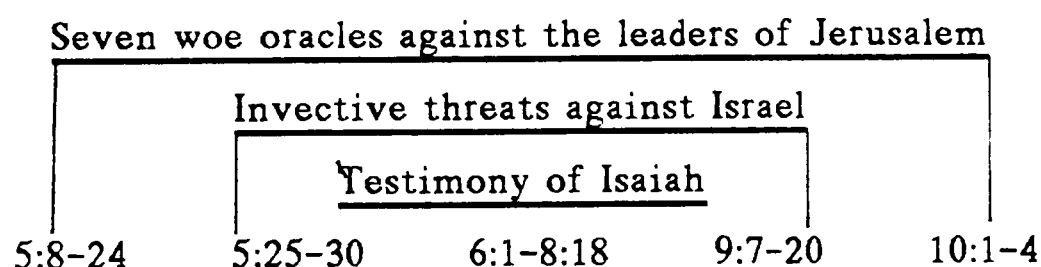
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1. Isa 10:4b is generally held to be an addition, the purpose of which was to include v1-4a with 9:7-20 [Wildberger 200].

insertion of the *Denkschrift*, 6:1-8:18. Barth [110-117] sees the dislocation as deliberate: 5:25 which begins with לכ but which has no antecedent, originally came at the end of 9:7-20 but was separated and placed in its present position to introduce the warning of Yahweh summoning the Assyrians (5:26-30) and to set this warning at the close of the first indictment of Israel and Judah (5:1-24).

The refrain in 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:4 could thus function as a theme resonating across the entire context 5:8-10:4, preceding a collection that consists primarily of oracles against Assyria and promises to Judah in 10:5f. Barth argues that this process was carried out by the AR editors at the time of Josiah. To underscore the importance of the refrain, the AR editors composed 14:24-27 to show that the hand that was once against Judah is now against Assyria.

Sheppard [1985: 196] strengthens Barth's proposals by suggesting that the AR editors consciously used the technique of *double inclusio*. He gives examples of the technique used elsewhere: Carlson [1964] has shown for 2 Sam 21-24 how the parallel stories of David caught in perfidy, remedied by appropriate repentance, bracket the king's last words; Landes [1967] has pointed to a similar *inclusio* which holds the thanksgiving psalm in its place in the book of Jonah. The AR editors used the technique in purposely dislocating both the woe oracle collection and the refrain tradition:



Vermeeylen [1977: 185-86] sees 9:7-20\*, 5:24-30\* and 5:8-24\*, 10:1-4\*

as two independent Isaian entities. He suggests that in the "monarchic period" the discourse in 9:7-20 was turned against the kingdom of the North by the insertions of "Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria" in 9:8a and "Rezin" in 9:10. Such a *relecture* provoked an association between 9:7-20 + 5:24-30 and the Book of Immanuel (6:1-9:6). In the exilic period both the Book of Immanuel and the section 9:7-20 + 5:24-30 were inserted into the series of woe oracles 5:8-23+10:1-4. Consequently 10:1-4 became separated not intentionally but by the incorporation of the Book of Immanuel.

During a second editing process, the six woe oracles in 5:8-23 were enclosed by adding v1-7 and by bringing 5:24-30 forward from its position after 9:7-20. This process was carried out by the Deuteronomic redactors whose objective was to offer an explanation for the drama which had overwhelmed Judah. The destruction of Jerusalem and ensuing exile were the consequences of the sins described by Isaiah: it was in all justice that Yahweh had condemned his people.

The displacement of these texts, therefore, provides a good example of how the arrangement of material within First Isaiah not only affects the texts which have been displaced but also influences the reader's perception of the surrounding discourses. The studies of Barth and Vermeylen show that an awareness of major editings of First Isaiah leads to a richer understanding of the book as a whole: their differing interpretations, however, warn of the danger of too rigid a system of classification. Different perceptions of the same data have led Barth to attribute the book's major formative influence to the AR editors of the Josianic period but Vermeylen to the Deuteronomic redactors of the exilic period.

The Prophetic Commission

Another area of probing into the present arrangement of the text of First Isaiah has been the function and role of the commissioning of the prophet in 6:9-10. The position of ch 6, when the message of Isaiah is well under way, contrasts with the position of the inaugural call of Jeremiah in ch 1 and with the slightly more revealing biographical detail given at the beginning of the books of Hosea and Amos.

The commission in 6:9-10 is found within the framework of the *Denkschrift* in 6:1-8:18 which relates to prophecies at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war and the refusal of Ahaz to hear Isaiah's message of assurance that he had nothing to fear from the threat to depose him. Many scholars, including Vermeylen [1977: 194] and Clements [1980a: 71], attribute the commission to a later period in Isaiah's teaching and so hold that it constitutes a retrospective reflection. Schmidt [1971] and Steck [1972] argue that the commission refers to and is worked out in the following two chapters: it is a prelude and warning pointing to the events of chs 7-8 which form the immediate point of reference in the divine commission. Auld [1986: 146] emphasizes that 6:9-10 does not refer to the inaugural call of Isaiah to his life's work but only to the specific task of approaching Ahaz in ch 7. He notes that its parallel is not with the call of Jeremiah but with the call of Micaiah in 1 Kgs 22:19-23 which describes not Micaiah's inaugural call but rather a specific challenge within his career to which he is directed.

Nevertheless, the outreach of the commission may extend to the whole of First Isaiah and not merely to the limits of the *Denkschrift*. If the phrase in 6:10c, וְשָׁב וּרְפָא לוֹ, generally held to be an addition [see Vermeylen 1977: 194], is excluded, the rest of the commission is constructed around two key verbs יָרָע and בָּן, neither of which has an object. The same verbs are found in 1:3 in the same sense and without



an object. Perhaps in the absence of an inaugural vocation, 1:3 was intended, in a later edition of the book, to point towards 6:9-10. Within chs 28-33, texts such as 28:9,19b; 29:10,18; 30:20; 32:3; 33:17 take up the same theme. Are these texts unrelated to each other and to 6:9-10 or is their presence evidence of a deliberate device on the part of an editor to highlight and sustain the theme of 6:9-10 and so influence the reader's perception of the content of these chapters? Clements [1985: 102-04] notes how the theme of blindness and deafness introduced in 6:9-10 is developed in Second Isaiah (42:16, 18-19, 21-25; 43:8) and subsequently in 35:5, a chapter that acts as a summary anticipation of chs 40-55 and lastly in 29:18 which develops Second Isaiah's theme: the ending of blindness and deafness now characterize the era of salvation.

Isaiah 28-33

Against the background of such probings into editorial activity in First Isaiah, this study attempts to take a fresh look at the composition of chs. 28-33, a section particularly rich in its literary forms and diversity of themes. The section has already received a great deal of attention. Formerly, the majority of commentators, e.g. Duhm [1892], Fohrer [1967a], Marti [1900], Procksch [1930], Wildberger [1982], relied upon the familiar historical approach to attempt to discover *authentic* Isaianic material. The form critical approach typified by Childs [1967] in his analysis of the woe oracle has had substantial effect on the study of the section since the material is loosely united around five woe oracles. Dietrich [1976] and Gonçalves [1986] have examined units of the section in attempting to relate the message of the prophet to his political background while the approach of Kaiser [1974], on the other hand, interprets chs 28-33 within a late eschatological perspective. Barth [1977] has looked at the section in the light of the AR: in particular he claims [328-36] that 28:23-29; 29:8; 30:27-33 are totally the creation of the AR and that 32:1-5, 15-20 form the conclusion to the

AR edition. The concern of Vermeylen [1977] has been to point out similarities with Deuteronomy and the historical books in an effort to establish what are the Deuteronomic additions. He describes 28:7-13, 14, 19-20; 29:10; 30:3, 5b, 9-17; 32:14 as exilic Deuteronomic *relectures* of Isaianic material. Isa 30:6a, 18, 27-33; 31:8-9; 33:2, 5-6a, 7-9, 10-12, 17-24a constitute an eschatological *relecture* from the start of the fifth century. Later the section is again reinterpreted by the addition of 28:5-6, 16a $\beta$ -17a, 23-29; 29:17-18, 22-24; 30:19-26; 31:6-7; 32:1-5, 15-20; 33:6b, 13-16, 24b which reflect the preoccupations of Judaism at the end of the fifth century. The studies of Irwin [1977] and Laberge [1978] have, within their own spheres, assisted in dealing with the textual and linguistic problems in chs 28-33.

Nielsen's brief review [1989: 217-19] of the history of 20th century research into Isa 1-39 reveals the preoccupation with the relationship between the message of judgment and the message of salvation. Fohrer [1967a] and Kilian [1983] represent best the group who deprive Isaiah of all positive statements which they date to later periods, especially after 587: for them, Isaiah was merely a prophet of doom. Wildberger typifies the approach that the prophet's original message contained both judgment statements and salvation statements: by use of his remnant concept, Isaiah had been able to link the two forms of statement in such a way that the inevitability of judgment is maintained while at the same time salvation for a selected group is proclaimed.

The significance of the juxtaposition of "woe and weal" oracles is particularly important in understanding the arrangement of chs 28-33. In this regard the studies of Exum [1979, 1981] (1) and Petersen [1979] are attractive in that they do not approach the text with the aim of resolving this dilemma but restrict their investigation to the literary connections within the immediate context of the chapter as it now

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1. See also Melugin [1983: 13-29] who supports Exum's literary approach and contrasts it with the customary traditional approach.

stands. This has two advantages: firstly, apparently less significant words and phrases do not escape the net as they sometimes do when a commentator has already created linguistic and thematic classifications and secondly, the recognition of *mots crochets* within a particular context can sharpen the reader's perception of the overall message presented by the text so that no inconsistency is obvious in the juxtaposition of messages of destruction and salvation.

Stansell's attempt [1983] to rediscover the various layers of redaction within ch 32 has met with less success since his study limits itself to one chapter and is therefore carried out with little reference to the the growth of the rest of the book.

For the purpose of this study, the *canon criticism* approach of Childs [1979] is also of limited value. From the perspective of the book of Isaiah, it seems highly improbable that the process of canonization had anything to do with the reasons why the book acquired its present shape. As Clements points out [1985: 97], from IQIsa and from the intrinsic contents of the book, it is certain that those who ultimately adopted the book of Isaiah into the canon along with the other prophetic books, found them in this present form. The intention in establishing the canon cannot be assumed to have been identical with the intention of those who shaped the book of Isaiah. On the contrary, the varied interests which contributed to the shape of the book may in fact provide a better insight into the reason why the whole corpus of Former and Latter Prophets acquired the shape it did [Clements 1985: 112]. However, Childs's argument [1979: 325] that chs 1-39 are structured according to a clear theological pattern, integrally related with chs 40-66, may help to show that the major aim of the redaction of First Isaiah was to ensure that its message was interpreted in the light of Second Isaiah.

Similarly, the usefulness of the *social critique* approach of

Brueggeman [1984] is limited for the purposes of this study. In suggesting that the "social dynamism" present in Second and Third Isaiah makes more real the substance of First Isaiah, he is again assuming a "closed" form of the book and is not primarily concerned with its growth and development.

In using an analysis of a particular section (chs 28-33) as a form of access to the entire book of Isaiah, the present study resembles that of Wiklander [1984] but especially that of Sweeney [1988]. Wiklander applies a rhetorical-critical approach to Isa 2-4 and argues that literary units must be studied and analysed as literary wholes. His aim [243] is to understand the intended function of chs 2-4 in its "specific historical socio-cultural setting". His observation [112] that "treaty" and "covenant" operate as the underlying concepts of the section leads him to choose a pre-exilic setting (734-622 BC) for the text which was composed at a time when Judah was vassal to a foreign power. His conclusion that chs 2-4, which were originally meant to be read orally, bear little relationship to the material which now forms their literary context shows how narrowly he defines the terms "literary" and "rhetorical"; the place of chs 2-4 within chs 1-39 receives scant attention.

Sweeney's study, on the other hand, looks at the place and function of chs 1-4 within the complete book of Isaiah (chs 1-66). His analysis of the diverse material of these chapters throws light on the arrangement of the rest of the book. The conclusions he draws from this analysis and their consequences for the understanding of the compilation of the book are similar to those derived from a detailed study of chs 28-33: the similarities are noted in the concluding chapter.

In the following study of Isa 28-33, the sections broadly follow the divisions accepted by the major commentators. In some cases, the sections are more obviously unified by theme, vocabulary or *inclusio*,

e.g. 31:1-3. In others, the division of material is arbitrary and pragmatic in that its purpose is to present units of material of manageable size that are less clearly unified and of a more obvious composite nature, e.g. 30:19-26, 27-33.

Each section consists of three parts:

- (A) INTRODUCTION Each section is briefly situated within the current scholarly debate as to its author, provenance and message.
- (B) VOCABULARY The most significant words in each verse are examined in the light of their use in Isaiah and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Similarities with other verses are investigated.
- (C) CONTEXT In the light of the use of the vocabulary and of similarities with other texts, the role each section plays within the context of chs 28-33 is explored.

This study, then, while taking note of other approaches to these chapters, is primarily interested in the possibilities that a close contextual reading of chs 28-33 has to offer. Such a reading suggests that much diverse and sometimes contradictory material has been consciously arranged, edited and added to, in order to present a clear and cogent message for a particular audience. An analysis of chs 28-33 also assists in the understanding of the literary relationship between First and Second Isaiah.

**Chapter 2**

**ISAIAH 28**

## Chapter 2

ISAIAH 28Isaiah 28: 1-6

## INTRODUCTION

The majority of commentators, e.g. Wildberger [1044-45], Vermeylen [1977: 385], consider the core of 28:1-4 as a woe oracle attributable to Isaiah and date it to the period after the end of the Syro-Ephraimite war in 732 BC (1). The exception is Kaiser [1974: 237] who, on the basis of v2, assigns the whole unit to the late post-exilic period. Earlier Duhm [194] argued that v2 is too vague to announce an Assyrian expedition into Palestine and so situated the discourse at the very start of Isaiah's career. Kaiser agrees that v2 is much too vague and general to announce a specific invasion but he takes the opposite view to Duhm and dates the unit to a very late period. He claims that the rite of crowning in v1 shows definite Hellenistic influence.

Vermeylen [1977: 385-86] attributes the core of v1-4 to Isaiah but argues that v2 is a post-exilic addition. He identifies the "strong and powerful" one as Ptolemy 1 or Demetrius Poliorcitus who destroyed Samaria in 312 and 296 respectively. V2 is an example of how the work of Isaiah has been revised with an anti-Samaritan slant (2). The classical woe oracle is characterized by a strict parallelism between its two parts: in this case between v1 and v3-4a. The theme of the storm has no bearing on the rest of v1-4 but is found in v15 and 17-18 where מים and שׁוּט occur. The purpose of v2 is to offer a parallel between the fate

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1. For the positions of the main commentators see Petersen [102-103].
  2. Other examples are Isa 1:29-31; 17:9-11; 27:9-11; 57:4-5; 65:3-5; 66:3-4, 17

of Ephraim and the fate of Jerusalem (1).

Petersen [105] believes that v1-4 was composed by someone using notions drawn from the Syro-Ephraimite material of chs 6-9. Isa 7:9 provides the imagery of Samaria as a head. Isa 8:7 which introduces the image of Assyria as powerful waters, is the source for 28:2. The material was formed into a woe oracle because woe oracles are the major markers of the collection chs 28-33. Someone (Isaiah or an editor) formulated a carefully crafted poem to introduce Isa 28 and the larger collection chs 28-33.

Fohrer [1967a: 19] and Wildberger [1044] suggest that v1-4 is located in its present position because of the motif of drunkenness which appears again in v7f and in 29:9f. Clements [1980a: 224] proposes that v1-4 was placed here because the redactor wished to include a condemnation of all Israel by opening the section with a woe against Ephraim. Vermeylen [1977: 386-87] and Exum [1979: 124] both feel that a definite parallel is intended between Ephraim and Jerusalem in ch 28. V1-4 acts as a warning to Jerusalem also.

Most commentators, e.g. Kaiser [1974: 241], Vermeylen [1977: 388], Clements [1980a: 224], Wildberger [1050], see v5-6 as a post-exilic addition offering reassurance and hope to the remnant (2). They draw attention to the way in which v5 picks up the vocabulary of v1-4. Petersen [107] suggests that v5-6 interpret v1-4 in the light of 4:2-4.

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1. The comparison made with the first ripe fig in v4b is also an addition, according to Vermeylen, but he does not know from what period.
  2. For a comprehensive view of positions adopted, see Petersen [102-103].



The author revised the image of the crown in 28:1-4 by the use of positive adjectives and by applying the image to Yahweh.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 1

עֲטָרָה: The hiphil of the verb עָטַר is found in Isa 23:8. The noun occurs in Isa 28:1,3,5; 62:3 (1). The placing of the crown upon the head symbolizes authority in 2 Sam 12:30; Ps 21:4; Zech 6:11,14. The phrase "bestower of crowns" in Isa 23:8 may denote power and authority. עֲטָרָה is a precious decorative ornament in Isa 62:3; Jer 13:18; Ez 21:31. In Proverbs, wisdom bestows a beautiful crown in 4:9; 14:24 and in 16:31; 17:6, it is associated with תִּפְאָרֶה. In Isa 28:1,3; Ez 21:31, it is associated with pride and the removal of the crown symbolizes the lowering of the proud. Wildberger [1047] and Kaiser [1974: 239] suggest that the word signifies in 28:1 "a garland of flowers".

גִּאּוֹן occurs in Isa 9:17; 12:5; 26:10; 28:1,3 and elsewhere in Ps 17:10; 89:10; 93:1. In most instances (Ps 89:10; 93:1; Isa 12:5; 26:10) the noun refers to the majesty of Yahweh. In Isa 9:17, it is used to describe a column of smoke. In Ps 17:10, it refers to the pride of the wicked. It is unlikely to mean "majesty" in 28:1,3, since normally the word in this sense is only used of Yahweh. It is more likely to mean pride or arrogance as in Ps 17:10.

Other forms from the root גָּאָה appear in Isaiah. The word גָּאָה in 2:12 signifies pride. The word גָּאֹן occurs in 2:10; 4:2; 13:11,19; 14:11; 16:6;

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1. Elsewhere it is found in 2 Sam 12:30; Job 19:9; 31:36; Ps 21:4; Prov 4:9; 12:4; 14:24; 16:31; 17:6; Jer 13:18; Lam 5:16; Ez 16:12; 21:31; 23:42; Zech 6:11,14.

19:21; 23:9; 24:14; 60:15. It generally refers either to the majesty of Yahweh (2:10; 19:21; 24:14) or the pride of men (13:11; 14:11; 16:6; 23:9). Twice the phrase "pride and glory" גאון ותפארה appears, in 4:2 and 13:19. גאון is used in Second Isaiah in 60:15 where Yahweh will make his people "majestic" forever. גאִוָּה occurs in 9:8; 13:3,11; 16:6; 25:11. In 9:8, it refers to the pride of Ephraim; in 16:6; 25:11, to the pride of Moab. In 13:3, it refers to the "proudly exulting ones" that Yahweh uses to destroy Babylon and in 13:11, to the pride of the arrogant whom Yahweh will destroy.

The phrase עטרת גאות does not appear elsewhere but from the context of both words elsewhere, it seems to refer in 28:1 to the pride of Ephraim and not to its majesty or power.

אֶפְרַיִם: In First Isaiah Ephraim occurs in 7:2,5,8,9,17; 9:8,20; 11:13; 28:1,3, quite often in a bad light. In ch 7, it is in league with Syria. In 9:8,20, Ephraim is proud, arrogant and belligerent. In 11:13, the jealousy of Ephraim will depart and it will be at peace with Judah. In 17:3, the fortress will disappear from Ephraim and the kingdom from Damascus. Ephraim's destruction is assured. 28:1-4 is unique in that it is the only oracle delivered specifically against Ephraim in First Isaiah.

שָׁמְרוֹן occurs in Isa 7:9; 8:4; 9:8; 10:9,10,11. In 10:9-11, Samaria appears as a parallel to Jerusalem. Exum [1979: 124] makes the point that in ch 28 Ephraim in v1-4 is parallel to Jerusalem in v14-18. The parallel would have been closer if Samaria had been mentioned instead of Ephraim. Petersen [105] suggests that Samaria is intended by the word שָׁמְרוֹן in v1-4.

צִיָּ: The hiphil of the root צוץ occurs in Num 17:23; Cant 2:9; Ps 72:16; 90:6; 92:8; 103:15; 132:18. The noun צִיָּ occurs in Ex 28:36; 39:20; Lev 8:9; Num 17:23; 1 Kgs 6:18,29,32,35; Job 14:2; Ps 103:15; Isa 40:7,8; Jer

48:9. The most common use of the verb and noun occurs as part of a simile or image to express the fleeting quality of a person's life (1). In Ps 92:7, it is the evil and wicked who flourish like grass. The word is also used to describe the lustre of David's crown in Ps 132:18 and the floral engravings of Solomon's Temple in 1 Kgs 6:18,29,32,35. In Ex 28:36; 39:30; Lev 8:9, it means a plate upon which an inscription can be written.

Isa 28:1,4, is similar to those instances where פִּיץ is used to denote the fleeting quality of man's life. In this case, it is Ephraim whose prime has now passed.

נָבֵל occurs in Isaiah in 1:30; 24:4; 28:1,4; 34:4; 40:7,8; 64:5 (2). In Isa 1:30, the people are compared to an oak whose leaf withers; in 34:4, the nations fade away as the leaves fall from the fig-tree; in 40:7,8, the grass withers; in 64:7 the people fade like a leaf because of their sins. It concerns the fading of leaves in Ps 1:3; Jer 8:13; Ez 47:12. The phrase נָבֵל צִיץ appears in 28:1,4 and in 40:7.

צִיץ occurs in Isaiah in 4:2; 13:19; 23:9; 24:16; 28:1,4,5 (3). It is considered to mean "beauty" [BDB: 840] or "decoration" [KB: 792]. Generally, the word describes the "glory" or "beauty" of the land (Jer 3:19; Ez 20:6,15; 25:9; 26:20; Dan 8:9; 11:16,41,45). In David's lament over Saul in 2 Sam 1:19, he opens his lament by saying that the glory of Israel has fallen. The word occurs most often in First Isaiah but no general pattern of how the word is used emerges. However, it often occurs as part of a

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1. Job 14:2; Ps 72:16; 90:6; 103:15; Isa 40:6-8.
  2. Elsewhere the word occurs in Ex 18:18; 2 Sam 22:46; Job 14:18; Ps 1:3; 18:46; Jer 8:13; Ez 47:12.
  3. Elsewhere it occurs mainly in Ezekiel, 7:20; 20:6,15; 25:9; 26:20; but also in 2 Sam 1:19; Jer 3:19; Dan 8:9; 11:16,41,45.

word cluster גאון, תפארה, נכבד, כבוד (4:2; 13:19; 23:9; 24:16; 28:1,4,5). Sometimes the word is associated with Yahweh: in 4:2, the branch of Yahweh is glorious and in 23:9, glory should be given to the righteous one. Sometimes glory is associated with the enemy of Yahweh: in 13:19, Babylon is the glory of kingdoms but Yahweh will overthrow it; in 23:9, he has purposed to destroy the pride of all glory. In 28:1-6, both ideas are present: Ephraim's glory is soon to pass (1,4) but Yahweh is the real crown of glory (v5).

Gilula [128] suggests that in 28:1 the word means a head ornament. It is parallel to עטרה in Ez 7:20; 20:6,15; 25:9. Furthermore, the Canaanite god Reshet is depicted on Egyptian monuments as wearing headgear in the likeness of a deer (צב'): Isaiah may have had such an ornament in mind.

תפארה: The frequency of this word in the Book of Isaiah testifies to its importance. Of the 47 occurrences of the word in the OT, 18 are found in Isaiah (1), 6 in Proverbs (2), 5 in Ezekiel (3), 4 in Psalms (4), 3 in Jeremiah (5) and 1 Chronicles (6), twice in Exodus (7) and once in Deuteronomy, Judges, 2 Chronicles, Esther, Lamentations and Zechariah (8).

It occurs with צב' in Isa 4:2; 20:5; 28:1,4,5 and with כבוד in Ex 28:2,40, a

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1. 8 times in First Isaiah 3:18; 4:2; 10:12; 13:19; 20:5; 28:1,4,5 and 10 times in Second Isaiah 44:13; 46:13; 52:1; 60:7,19; 62:3; 63:12,14,15; 64:10.
  2. Prov 4:9; 16:31; 17:6; 19:11; 20:29; 28:12.
  3. Ez 16:12,17,39; 23:42; 24:25.
  4. Ps 71:8; 78:16; 89:18; 96:6.
  5. Jer 13:11,18; 33:9.
  6. 1 Chron 22:5; 29:11,13.
  7. Ex 28:2,40.
  8. Deut 26:19; Judg 4:9; 2 Chron 3:6; Esther 1:4; Lam 2:1; Zech 12:7.

word which is in the same semantic range. It is used to describe ornaments in Isa 3:18; 28:5; 44:13; 52:1 or a crown in Prov 4:9; 16:31; 17:6; Isa 62:3; Jer 13:18; Ez 16:12. In 28:1,4,5, it is not used to describe the crown but it appears in close proximity. Irwin [4-5] notes that עטרת תפארה is a stereotyped phrase which in Isa 28:1 has been deliberately broken up.

In some instances in First Isaiah, תפארה is used in a context which deals with the self-proclaimed splendour of the nations and so has the connotation of pride: Assyria in 10:12, Babylon in 13:19, Egypt in 20:5. Likewise in 28:1-4, the glorious splendour is obviously a self-proclaimed splendour on the part of Ephraim which will be utterly destroyed.

In contrast to the splendour of the nations, is the majesty of Yahweh. תפארה is used often in connection with Yahweh. The branch of the Yahweh is glorious (4:2). Yahweh is a diadem of beauty (28:5): his house is beautiful (60:7; 64:10) (1). His arm, name and habitation are glorious in Isa 63:12-15 (2). The glory of Israel is Yahweh (60:19) and the glory of Yahweh is Israel (43:13). Israel is a crown of beauty in the hand of Yahweh (62:3). In Jer 13:11; 33:19, it is Yahweh's plan to make Israel and Judah a name, a praise and a glory, תפארה, for himself.

To sum up: in Second Isaiah, as in the rest of the OT, the occurrence of the word תפארה has positive connotations, often associated with the glory of Yahweh or the glory of Israel. In the latter case, it probably denotes a glory that has been transferred from Yahweh to his people.

In First Isaiah, in two late texts, 4:2, 28:5, it has positive

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1. The word is used to describe the Temple in 1 Chron 22:5.
  2. תפארה is always associated with Yahweh when it occurs in the Psalms, 71:8; 78:61; 89:18; 96:6 and in 1 Chron 29:11,13.

connotations. In the remaining texts in First Isaiah, 10:12; 13:19; 20:5; 28:1,4, the word has negative connotations: it is a self-proclaimed glory on the part of the nations and of its nature cannot last. This idea is reinforced in 28:1-4 by the phrase **צִיץ נָבֵל** which precedes the phrase **עֲבִי תִפְאָרָה**.

**נָל**: IQIsa reads **נָל**. Driver [1968a: 47] favours the change but Irwin [4-5] argues that the parallelism within the line supports the MT. The word **נָל** occurs in Ps 23:4; Isa 22:1,5; 28:1,4; Jer 7:32; 19:6; Zech 14:4,5. It is tempting to suggest that it is used almost exclusively to suggest a valley that does not yet exist or which has a figurative sense. In Isa 22:1,5, it concerns the Valley of Vision; in Jer 7:32, it concerns the Valley of Slaughter; in Ps 23:4, it concerns the Valley of Darkness; in Zech 14:4,5, it concerns a valley which will come into existence when the Mount of Olives splits at the coming of Yahweh. However, two factors militate against such a conclusion: firstly, the plural of **נָל** is found with the literal meaning "valleys" (2 Kgs 2:16; Ez 6:3; 7:16; 32:5; 35:8; 36:4,6): and secondly a very similar word **נָל** or **נָל** is sometimes found meaning valleys that exist or even specific valleys (Deut 34:6; Josh 8:11; 1 Sam 17:3; Isa 40:4; Mic 1:6).

**שֶׁמֶן** occurs in the plural in Cant 1:3; 4:10; Isa 25:6; 28:1,4; Amos 6:6. In Amos 6:6; Cant 1:3; 4:10; the word means "oils". In Isa 25:6 and 28:1,4, it refers to luxury and superfluity. **הַלֹּאִי-יִין** contains the same idea. **שֶׁמֶן** is nearly always found in the context of feasting and the drinking of wine. The singular is used in 30:23 to indicate the fertility of the land nourished by the rain of Yahweh.

V 1b is constructed with two nominal phrases. Wildberger [1042] and

Kaiser [1974: 236] regard ג'א שמנים as a gloss taken from v4a. Vermeylen [1977: 386] omits the phrase הלומי-יין as secondary.

הלומי-יין: The root הלם is quite rare in the OT. The participle occurs only in Isa 28:1. Elsewhere in the OT (1) the verb always means "to strike". The image is quite consistent here, "struck with wine". However, the verb always has a very literal meaning and not a metaphorical sense of being confused as in 28:1.

### Verse 2

חזק occurs in Isaiah 18 times (2). In Second Isaiah, it always denotes strength, holding fast and the notion of stability in an encouraging and exhortative way. It is used both to evoke the strengthening of the people by Yahweh (35:3,4; 40:10; 41:9,13; 42:6; 45:1) and the obligation that the people have to "hold fast" to the covenant (56:2,4,6; 64:6). The adjective חזק appears in Isaiah only in 27:1; 28:2; 40:10. It always refers to Yahweh: to his strong sword in 27:1; to the agent of Yahweh who is mighty and strong in 28:2; and to Yahweh himself coming with might in 40:10.

אמץ: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 35:3; 41:10; 44:14 and the adjective in 28:2 and 46:26. It is normally Yahweh who is the agent. It appears with אמץ in 28:2 and 35:3. אמץ, like חזק, in 28:2 is more typical of the language of Second Isaiah.

Syr, Vulg and LXX take חזק ואמץ to refer to Yahweh. Irwin [8] agrees and explains the ל as emphatic. The traditional interpretation has been

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1. Judg 5:22,26; 1 Sam 14:16; Ps 74:6; 141:5; Prov 23:35; Isa 16:8; 41:7.
  2. 6 times in First Isaiah, 4:1; 27:5; 28:22; 33:23; 35:3,4, and 12 times in Second Isaiah, 41:6,7,9,13; 42:6; 45:1; 51:18; 54:2; 56:2,4,6; 64:6.

to see these words as referring to Assyria and most commentators e.g. Childs [1967: 7], Wildberger [1048], retain this view. Vermeylen [1977: 385-86], however, sees in v2 a reference to Ptolemy 1.

זרם occurs 6 times in First Isaiah in 4:6; 25:4 (twice); 28:2; 30:30; 32:2. In three texts, 28:2,17; 30:30, it is seen as an instrument of Yahweh's wrath and punishment. In three further texts, it is a question of shelter from the storm. The first of these, 4:6, is generally seen as a later addition [Vermeylen 1977: 155]. 25:4-5 states that Yahweh is a shelter from the storm - a storm that is associated with the ruthless in v5. In 32:2, if the king of v1 is Yahweh, then the image is applied to him.

ברר: The verb occurs only in Isa 32:19. The noun has a very restricted use. It always signifies the weapon of Yahweh, often used as a means of his punishment - of the Egyptians during the Exodus in Ex 9:18-33 (10 times) and in Josh 10:11; Job 38:22; Hag 2:17. In Isa 28:2,17; 30:30, it is a weapon of punishment in the hands of Yahweh.

Xella [440] associates the phrase ברר כזרם with the name of the god *Baradu nadu* found in the tablets of Ebla. The god is connected with the river Euphrates in Mesopotamian and Arabic tradition. Xella takes the name of the god to mean "the great cold". In 28:2 ברר is parallel to קטב: while קטב is linked with the hot scorching wind, ברר is linked with hailstones and the cold wind. In 28:2, he who punishes Ephraim is compared to the frost of Barad and the whirlwind of Qeteb. In 30:30 [Xella: 440], the stones of Barad are used by Yahweh who hurls them against those who arouse his vengeance (cf Josh 10:11; Sir 32:10).

שער is very rare. In Isaiah, it occurs only in 28:2 and elsewhere in Job



18:20; Ez 27:35; 32:10. It always means "horror". A similar form is found in Job 9:17 and Nah 1:3; in both cases the word means a storm. As in Isa 28:2, it is the instrument of Yahweh's punishment.

קטב occurs in Deut 32:24; Ps 91:6; Isa 28:2; Hos 13:14. It means pestilence in Deut 32:24 and Ps 91:6. In Isa 28:2 and Hos 13:14, it carries the idea of destruction against Ephraim. Watts [360], citing Jastrow [1346], states that at a later date the Jews knew a demon by this name. Irwin [8] sees it as the name of a god Qeteb and translates the phrase in Isa 28:2 as "tempest hell-sent."

נְבִירִים: The adjective נְבִיר is found only in Isaiah in 10:13; 16:14; 17:12; 28:2 and in Job 8:2; 15:10; 31:25; 34:17,24; 36:5 (1). The phrase מֵי־נְבִירִים is found in Isa 17:12; 28:2. In 17:12, the nations roar like many waters but Yahweh will subdue them while in 28:2 it is the agent of Yahweh who will destroy Ephraim that is compared to many waters.

שטף occurs in Isa 8:8; 10:22; 28:2,15,17,18; 30:28; 43:2; 66:12. Apart from 10:22, it is associated with waters. In Isa 8:8, Assyria is associated with the mighty waters. It occurs 4 times in ch 28 (2,15,17,18). The word in v2 picks up the word from v14-18 where the waters overwhelm the leaders of Jerusalem. In 30:28, Yahweh's breath is like an overflowing stream that punishes the nations. In 43:2, when the people pass through waters, they will not overwhelm them (2). In 66:12, Yahweh extends the wealth of the nations to Jerusalem like an overflowing stream.

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1. In Isa 10:13, Q has נְאִבִּיר and K has נְאִבִּיר, so it is not certain whether the word is in fact נְבִיר. Other suggestions such as נְעִפִיר, נְאִפִּיר, have been put forward.
  2. In Ps 69:3; 124:4 overwhelming waters suggest an image of personal danger.

נָחַ: The hiphil occurs in Isaiah in 14:1,3; 28:2,12; 30:32; 46:7; 63:14; 65:15. It is generally used of "giving rest" (14:1,3; 28:12; 63:14). Only in 28:2 and 30:32 is it used with a violent sense. BDB [618] gives the two meanings of this verb as "to give rest to" or "to lay down". Wildberger [1048] notes that in 28:2 הָנִיחַ has no object and he suggests that the intended object is the crown of v1.

### Verse 3

רָמַס: The form תִּרְמָסֶנָּה is plural while עֲטַרְתָּ is singular. BHS suggests a change in pointing to תִּרְמָסֶנָּה to make it singular with an *energetic* ending.

The verb רָמַס occurs in the niphal only in 28:3. Elsewhere the root occurs in 1:12; 16:4; 41:25; 63:3. The noun מְרָמָס occurs in 5:5; 7:25; 10:6; 28:3,18. Trampling underfoot nearly always denotes destruction in Isaiah (5:5; 10:6; 16:4; 26:6; 28:3,18; 63:3). This is the meaning in most other instances in which the root occurs (1). In First Isaiah, it is nearly always Israel (or Ephraim in the case of 28:3) which is being oppressed and trampled underfoot (5:5; 7:25; 10:6; 16:4; 28:3,18). The exception is 26:6 where the feet of the poor and needy trample upon the "lofty city". In the context of ch 28, both Ephraim (v3) and Jerusalem (v18) are both to be trampled underfoot.

### Verse 4

בְּבוֹרָה occurs in Isa 28:4; Jer 24:2; Hos 9:10; Mic 7:1. The first ripe fig is always a simile or metaphor. It denotes something desirable: the prophet desires it in Mic 7:1; it is eaten up quickly in Isa 28:4; in Hos 9:10 the

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1. 2 Kgs 14:9; 2 Chron 25:18; Ps 7:6; Ez 26:11; 34:18,19; Dan 8:7,10,13; Mic 7:10.

love of Yahweh for Israel is compared to when one sees a first ripe fig; in Jer 24:2, the first ripe figs are contrasted with the bad figs. In Isa 28:4, Ephraim is compared to a first ripe fig; however, the point of comparison here is the suddenness with which it is eaten, signifying the suddenness of Ephraim's destruction, rather than the idea that Ephraim is special like the first ripe fig.

קִיץ: The word occurs in Isaiah only in 16:9 and 28:4.

בלע occurs in Isaiah in 3:12; 9:15; 25:7,8; 28:4,7; 49:19. In 3:12 and 9:15 the leaders "swallow up" the paths of those for whom they are responsible. The priest and prophet are confused and "swallowed up" with wine in 28:7. It is used in the sense of "completely destroying" in 25:7,8; 28:4; 49:19.

### Verse 5

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: The phrase occurs some 50 times in First Isaiah. Within chs 28-33, it occurs in 28:5,22,29; 29:6; 31:4. The verb צָבָא is used of Yahweh in 31:4. The epithet is apt in a section where Yahweh is associated with warfare, e.g. 28:2,6,13,21. It may be that יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in v29 consciously repeats the phrase of v5 and v22. That wisdom proceeds from יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in v29 tempers his negative image presented in v22.

הַיּוֹם הַהוּא: Within chs 28-33, the phrase occurs in 28:5; 29:18; 30:23, (in 30:26, "the day" is specifically the day "when Yahweh binds up the hurt of his people"). It always introduces a contrast: in 28:5, the image of Yahweh as crown contrasts with the image of Ephraim as crown in v1-4; in 29:18, the images of the deaf hearing and blind seeing contrast with 29:9-11. In 30:23, the image of fertility contrasts with the stark image

of destruction in 30:17.

צפירת occurs only in Isa 28:5 and Ez 7:7,10. However, the context of Ezekiel is quite different from that in which the word is found in Isa 28. In Ez 7:7,10, RSV translates the word appropriately as "doom". Wildberger [1043] and BDB [862] compare the word with the Arabic *ṣafara* "to braid".

שאר occurs in Isaiah in 7:3; 10:19-22; 11:11; 14:22; 16:14; 17:3; 21:17. An immense amount of possible interpretations have been put forward for שאר ישוב in 7:3 [Wildberger 277f]. Common to many is the idea that only a remnant of the Judean army will return. While the remnant of Israel's enemies, Babylon (14:22), Moab (16:14), Syria (17:3), Kedar (21:17) will be wiped out or made very few, the remnant of Israel, on the other hand, will be looked after by Yahweh (10:19-22; 11:11; 28:5). The word is more important in the later period of Israel's history. Isa 10:19-22 and 11:11 are both in prose and 28:5 shows similarities with Second Isaiah (62:3) (1).

Vermeulen [1977: 79] notes that שאר concerns either the wretched remnant of the nations or the glorious remnant of Israel. He notes that none of the texts in the latter group are authentic to Isaiah. He therefore holds that Isaiah had no theology of a remnant. The promise in v5-6 is directed to the faithful remnant of Jews in the late post-exilic period and not to the general mass of agnostic Jews.

### Verse 6

רוח occurs 26 times in First Isaiah and 19 times in Second Isaiah. In 6

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1. Elsewhere the word occurs in 1 Chron 11:18; 16:41; 2 Chron 9:29; 24:14; Ezra 3:8; 4:3,7; Neh 10:29; 11:1,20; Zeph 1:4.

instances, it means "storm" or "wind" (see 32:2). It rarely occurs on its own and is often found in the construct form:

4:4:	רוח משפט, רוח בער
11:2:	רוח יהוה רוח חכמה ובינה רוח עצה וגבורה רוח רעת ויראת יהוה
19:3:	רוח מצרים
19:14:	רוח עושים
26:9:	נפשי .. רוחי
28:6:	רוח משפט
29:10:	רוח תרדמה
29:24:	תעי-רוח
30:1:	לא-מני .. לא רוחי
31:3:	לא-אל .. לא רוח
32:15:	רוח ממרום
34:16:	פי יהוה ..רוחו

It is sometimes found with the preposition קרב (19:3; 19:14; 26:9) and sometimes with על (11:2; 29:10; 32:15). It is associated with Yahweh in 4:4; 11:2; 28:6; 30:1; 31:3; 34:16; in particular רוח יהוה is found twice (4:4; 28:6). In 11:2, where the word is found 4 times, it is associated with many wisdom characteristics. רוח is a spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord; but רוח can also be used to denote not wisdom but rather the opposite - confusion and lack of clarity e.g. in 19:3, the spirit of the Egyptians will be emptied out and their plans confounded. In 19:14, following a condemnation of

Egypt's wisdom, Yahweh mingles within her a spirit of confusion. In 29:10 Yahweh pours upon the seers and prophets a spirit of deep sleep. In 29:24, those who err in spirit will come to understanding. In 30:1; 31:1, the plan of the rebellious sons will fail because it is not of God's spirit. Elsewhere in prophetic literature there are very few instances where Yahweh causes a spirit of confusion to come upon the people (1). Neither does the word occur in any consistent pattern in wisdom literature which might suggest that it is a key word there. When רוּחַ is associated with wisdom vocabulary or found in a context of confusion as in 19:3; 19:14; 29:10; 29:24, it seems to be a particular characteristic of the Book of Isaiah.

In Second Isaiah, רוּחַ occurs often:

- (a) in 40:13, as in 11:2, the spirit of Yahweh is associated with wisdom vocabulary.
- (b) in 42:1, the spirit of Yahweh is associated with משפט as in 4:4; 28:6.
- (c) in 44:3; 61:1-4, the spirit of Yahweh is associated with fertility and fruitfulness in nature and with the rebuilding of the city.
- (d) in 63:14 (see 32:18) the spirit of Yahweh gives his people rest (נוח).
- (e) in 57:16, the spirit proceeds from on high (see 32:15).

משפט: The word occurs in First Isaiah 21 times. Within chs 28-33, it occurs in 28:6,17,26; 30:18; 32:1,7,16; 33:5. Justice is an attribute of Yahweh (28:6,17,26; 30:18; 33:5). משפט or צדקה resonates

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1. In Hos 4:12,19, a spirit of harlotry leads the people astray.

throughout the section; it may offer a reason, by way of interpretation, for the destructive attitude of Yahweh towards his people; it serves as a reminder that Yahweh had to punish in all justice. The theme of justice is kept continually before the reader with particular emphasis in ch 32 where it appears in v1,16,17 and which contrasts with the lack of justice of the knave in 32:7.

גבורה: The word occurs in Isa 3:25; 11:2; 28:6; 30:15; 33:13; 36:5; 63:15. In Isa 28:6, the phrase לרוח משפט is parallel to לגבורה. In 11:2, גבורה is found with עצה. Both contexts are quite similar. Yahweh is the source of strength in both instances. In 30:15, the people will find strength in quietness and trust in Yahweh. In 33:19, everyone is called to acknowledge the might of Yahweh. In 63:15, the might of Yahweh seems to lie hidden in time of trouble.

משיבי: The hiphil participle occurs only in Isa 28:6; 38:8; 44:25.

מלחמה occurs in Isa 2:4; 3:2,25; 13:4; 21:15; 22:2; 27:4; 28:6; 42:25. In later texts, 13:4; 27:4; 42:25, it is Yahweh who prepares to fight in battle.

שער appears in First Isaiah in 14:31; 24:12; 28:6; 29:21. In 14:31 and 24:12 it occurs parallel to the word "city", almost as a synonym and this may be the significance of the word in 28:6 also. 29:21 refers to the one who carries out justice at the gate. The purpose of the word שער in 28:6 may be to unite closely the ideas in v6a and v6b since both activities are carried out at the gate.

**CONTEXT**

Vermeulen's argument [1977: 386-88] that v1-4 was placed at the beginning of the chapter to act as a warning to Jerusalem and that v2 was introduced in the light of v14-18 is convincing. However, it is likely that v5-6 is the key text in understanding the present arrangement of ch 28. It contains four similes introduced by ל, the purpose of which is to emphasize that Yahweh is everything that Ephraim is not. V5 refers back to v1-4 while v6 introduces the reader to the following verses. V5-6 is therefore a link between v1-4 and v7-8, material which deals with the theme of drunkenness. The author of v5-6 may have been responsible for organizing the chapter into its present shape. V9 serves a similar function to v7-8 as v5 does to v1-4: Yahweh, not Ephraim, is the true crown and Yahweh, not the priest and prophet, is the true teacher. In v6, מִשְׁפָּט is an attribute of Yahweh as it is in v17 and v26. The phrase יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת occurs in v5, 22, 29: יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in v29 implies that יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת has other attributes which, in the context of ch 28, may be those expressed in v5-6.

Isa 28:1-6 introduce the central themes of chs 28-33 which are reinforced by repetition in the succeeding chapters. Ephraim, depicted as a proud nation that has displeased Yahweh, represents a more comprehensive group, the wicked and evil in general (1).

In contrast to this group stands the remnant of the people who symbolize the just. Thus in v1-6 a basic antithesis is established between the evil and the just: the word שָׁרָא (v1) which refers to Ephraim has its consonants reversed in the word שָׂרָא which refers to

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1. The position of the oracle against Ephraim at this stage of the book provides a link between the earlier chapters where Ephraim is mentioned (chs 7,9) and chs 28-33.



the remnant (v5).

A second antithesis is established, this time between Ephraim and Yahweh. Ephraim is a עטרת גאות while Yahweh is a עטרת צבי. The nouns תפראה, גאות, often applied to Yahweh become ironic when applied to Ephraim. The adjectives in v2, חזק ואמץ, denoting the strength of Yahweh contrast with the weak and confused state of Ephraim, expressed in the phrase הלומי-יין in v1. In 28:14-18; 30:1-5; 31:1-3, a similar antithesis is set up between Yahweh and Egypt.

V1-6 also introduce the reader to the way in which images from nature are employed throughout chs 28-33. Destructive elements of nature are used to describe the plight of the wicked while images of fertility are associated with the just. In v1, עטרת may, as Wildberger suggests [1047], signify a garland of flowers and so a crown that is fading fast. ציץ too denotes something that fades fast and נבל is used of leaves and foliage decaying (1:30; 34:4; 40:7,8; 64:7). The noun שמנים, used of Ephraim in v1, occurs in a more positive context in 30:23 to describe the fertility of the land provided by Yahweh for the just. Yahweh uses the destructive elements of nature, מים שטפים, שער, ברר, זרם, to punish the wicked but to the just, he is a protection against the same elements (see 32:2). The last image of Ephraim is that of the בכורה which is used to describe its sudden disappearance. Later in chs 28-33, Yahweh blesses the just with fertility and an increase of produce (29:17; 30:23-24; 33:15).

A further theme introduced in v1-6, that of drunkenness, is developed figuratively into the theme of confusion, lack of understanding and blindness (28:7-10; 29:10-11,24). These are the characteristics of the evil and wicked.

Isaiah 28: 7-13.

## INTRODUCTION

Most commentators attribute the kernel of 28:7-13 to the prophet Isaiah. Fohrer [1967a: 51] places it at the time of the Ashdodite rebellion (713-711 BC) but the vast majority place it somewhere between the years 705 and 701 (1). Wildberger [1056] suggests that it may be the earliest of Isaiah's sayings condemning Hezekiah's alliance with Egypt.

The main commentators are of the opinion that v7a is a redactional link with v1-4 (2). Kaiser [1974: 248] and Wildberger [1055] think that v13 is also a later addition. Childs [1967: 28] believes that in v7-13 a redactor has united several independent units from different periods and situations into a kerygmatic unity. He notes in particular the parallel in form and content to 30:15.

Kaiser [1974: 243-44] sees two levels within the section: an Isaianic core and a late eschatological reinterpretation. V7b-8\* is a prophecy of Isaiah from 701 in which he condemns the excessive drinking which followed the sacrificial meal - a practice condemned in Lev 10:8f. V7a is a redactional link with v1-4 but v7bαβ is also a later addition: it represents an attempt to make the purpose of the reproach more concrete. V13 is an artificial construction compiled from v10 and 8:15. The basic Isaian text received its present form as the result of a

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1. Childs [1967: 28], Kaiser [1974: 246-47], Clements [1980a: 226], Wildberger [1056], Gonçalves [188]. For a summary of positions adopted, see Clements [1980a: 226].
  2. Childs [1967: 28], Kaiser [1974: 246], Clements [1980a: 227], Wildberger [1057].

redactional process, similar to the process found in 30:8-17; in v11-12, the words of Yahweh refer back to his message. As in 30:15, the redactor makes Yahweh state explicitly that his message is rejected by the people and their leaders in order to impress upon later readers that the catastrophe was a consequence which they had brought upon themselves by rejecting what Yahweh offered. V12 is a summary of Isaiah's preaching by a redactor looking back upon the past and working at the earliest between 597-587. A proto-apocalyptic redactor later added v7a, 7bαβ, 13. The purpose of 7a was to link together the fates of Ephraim and Jerusalem. V7bαβ is a reference to later post-exilic cultic prophets whose corruption the redactor wished to condemn. Their decisions and oracles, as in 29:9, are evidence of their spiritual blindness.

Vermeulen [1977: 390] states that v7-13 forms an autonomous literary unit but that v7-22 should also be treated as a unit albeit a redactional one. In the mouth of Isaiah the discourse of v7-13 envisaged the foreign politics of Judah which leaned on Egypt for support instead of Yahweh. In the perspective of the redactor, Jerusalem is guilty just as Samaria is; such an interpretation presupposes the fall of Jerusalem. The redactor came from Deuteronomic circles where the parallel fates of Ephraim and Jerusalem are continuously underlined. A similar concern, according to Vermeulen [390], is present in the books of Kings, in the Deuteronomic redaction of Amos, Micah and Isaiah; in particular he compares the Deuteronomic commentary on the fall of Samaria in 2 Kgs 17:7f with Isa 28:7f. He does not agree with the many commentators who treat v13 as secondary. Without it, he says, the unit is truncated. It is 8:15 which picks up the list of verbs from 28:13 and not vice versa. Isa 8:15 is secondary and constitutes a redactional explanation of the verses which precede it.

Wildberger [1056-57] sees the kernel of the unit as coming from Isaiah. The redactional link (v7a) was already in place before v5-6 were added. V13 is also the work of a redactor who wished to make more concrete the judgment of Isaiah. More than other commentators, Wildberger stresses the internal unity of v7b-12. V7b-8 is to be understood as a reprimand which reaches its climax in v12. He does not agree with Kaiser that v12 is an addition on the grounds that it is characteristic of the oracles of Isaiah not to end with a threat.

Other commentators adopt similar positions. Clements [1980a: 226-27] sees v7a and v13 as late additions. V9 represents a quotation from Isaiah of what the drunken priests and prophets are saying about him. Gonçalves [188] agrees that v7a is a redactional link and makes the important point, which can be supported by a study of the verbs **אמר** and **ברך** in Isaiah, that there are close similarities between 28:7b-13, 28:1-4 and 30:15-17. In each, a quotation of Yahweh and of the people are directly opposed. In her literary analysis of the chapter, Exum [1979: 132] questions the unity of v7-8 with v9-13. She points out that in v9-13 there is no repetition of phrases and no mention of priest and prophet, rather **העם הזה** is the subject of the accusation. V9a forms an *inclusio* with the parable of the farmer in v23-29 where instruction is also the topic.

Most recently van der Toorn [199-217] has tried to find evidence that the unit v7-22 is a thinly veiled threat against Judaeen necromancy. Mot and Sheol were deities whose protection had been secured by means of various magical practices. **בזב** and **שקר** refer to alien gods associated with the underworld, most probably Chemosh and Moloch [204]. V10

refers to the nonsense spoken during séances. The necromantic rites reproduced bird-like twitterings which are reflected in the onomatopoeic words in 29:4b and 8:19. Van der Toorn [210] appeals to a Mesopotamian "Birdcall Text" which offers a theological interpretation of various birdcalls, with the purpose of discovering the attribution of the birds in question to different gods, e.g. the partridge says *si asakku, si asakku* "Go away, Asakku!". The Judaeans deciphered the messages of the dead along similar lines. Isaiah reproduces a pastiche of birdcalls to underscore the ludicrousness of the necromantic messages (v10).

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 7

וְגַם-אֱלֹהִים occurs in Isa 28:7; 49:15. The phrase וְגַם-הוֹנֵא occurs in 31:2 which may be an indication that the latter verse is an addition. Most commentators point out the redactional nature of the phrase. Petersen's description [108] of the function of the phrase is representative:

"V7ab is a redactional creation which integrates the list of roles (priest and prophet) with the previously mentioned drunkards. All the words in 7ab reappear in v7c-f".

הִשָּׁג appears only twice in Isaiah, both instances being in 28:7 (1). Generally the word means "to wander" especially in the sense of doing wrong or committing sin. In Job (6:24; 19:4) and Proverbs (5:23; 20:1; 28:10) the verb is associated with confusion and lack of understanding. Only in Isa 28:7 and Prov 20:1 is the verb used to denote drunkenness. Driver [1968a: 51] has challenged the meaning "to wander" or "go astray",

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1. Elsewhere the root occurs in Lev 4:13; Num 15:22; Deut 27:18; Job 6:24; 12:16; 19:4; Ps 119:10, 21, 118; Prov 5:19, 20, 23; 19:27; 20:1; 28:10; Ez 34:6; 45:20.

preferring "was wrapped up in" or "addicted to".

תעה: The verb appears 50 times in the OT. In 6 instances it means simply to "wander"; 42 times it has the idea of erring in the sense of sin. In 2 instances (Job 12:25; Isa 19:14) it denotes the idea of confusion. In both texts, the confusion is compared to that of a drunk man. Vermeyleen [1977: 320-21] suggests that 19:14, a passage written to discredit Egyptian wisdom, was composed of material taken from 28:7. Driver [1968a: 52] translates the word as "cackled, croaked, guffawed". Eitan [71] derives the word from תעע and translates it in accordance with an Arabic root meaning "to be faint, languid".

In Isaiah the root תעה occurs in 3:12; 9:15; 16:8; 19:13,14; 21:4; 28:7; 29:24; 30:28; 32:6; 35:8; 47:15; 53:6; 63:17. In 3:12, 9:15 the verbs תעו and בלעו are parallel. As in 28:7, both texts concern the leaders of the people who lead them astray. In 9:15 and 28:7, the verb is used to describe the actions of the נביא. The verb in 29:24 and 32:6 concerns those "who err in spirit" and those "who speak error concerning the Lord". In 35:8, fools shall not err in the highway of the Lord.

שכר: Words from the root are very common in the OT. In Isaiah, the root occurs in 5:22; 19:14; 24:9,20; 28:1,3,7; 29:9 and in Second Isaiah in 49:26; 51:21; 56:12; 63:6. Sometimes it has a figurative sense - 19:14; 24:20; 28:1,3,7; 29:9; 51:21. Sometimes the image of drunkenness is closely followed by wrong doing; in 5:22-23, drunkenness and social justice are related. Drunkenness in a figurative sense is also found in Job 12:25; Ps 107:27; Prov 20:1; 31:4; Jer 13:13; 23:9; 48:26; 51:39,57; Mic 2:11; Nah 3:11.

ן" occurs 13 times in Isaiah (1).

בלע is used of Ephraim in v4. BDB [118] gives the meaning "befuddled". Driver [1934: 52] points to a Syriac parallel root "was struck down". Wildberger [1053] prefers "confused". Irwin [17] makes a strong case with parallels (e.g. Jer 23:9; Ps 107:27) for the meaning "are swallowed up".

נבִיא: The phrase occurs elsewhere in the OT only in Lam 2:20. In Isaiah נבִיא appears with the proper name Uriah in 8:2 and in 24:2; 28:7. Apart from the phrase "Isaiah the prophet" in 37:2; 38:1; 39:3, the word נבִיא appears in a list in 3:2 and in negative contexts in 9:14; 28:7; 29:10.

Wildberger [1058], Clements [1980a: 227] and Gonçalves [188] state that the prophet here is a cult prophet. The occasion Isaiah has in mind is the abuse of alcohol in the temple after sacrificial banquets. Wildberger notes that the cult prophets were ecstasies and part of the tools of their trade were wine and music. The role of the cult prophet was to interpret visions and the role of the priest was to deliver judgments.

רֵאָה: The MT points the word as רֵאָה, "a visionary". It is the only occurrence of the form. Driver [1968a: 52], Dahood [1963: 266] and Irwin [18] derive the form from רָאָה "to drink one's fill", a by-root of רוּה. Watts [361] discusses the possibility that the word has been altered to conceal an offensive word. From Ugaritic sources, he suggests an original meaning from חֲרָא "excrement".

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1. Isa 5:11,12,22; 16:10; 22:13; 24:9; 28:1 29:9; 24:11; 28:7; 51:21; 55:1; 56:21.

פָּקַד occurs in Isaiah in 28:7 and 58:10 (1). The most consistent use of the word is in Proverbs where it means "to find" but elsewhere its meaning is best determined by the context e.g. "give" in Ps 144:13; "carry out" in Ps 140:9; "move" in Jer 10:4. BDB [807] translates the verb in 28:7 as "they stumble". Driver [1968a: 53] translates "collapse" or "hiccup". Irwin [19] suggests reading the root פִּקַּד as a cognate with פִּוּץ "flow, overflow". He reads it in parallel to נִבְלַע.

פְּלִילִיָּה occurs in the singular in Isa 16:3 and 28:7. In the plural it always means "judges" (Ex 21:22; Deut 32:31; Job 31:11; 31:28). In Isa 16:3, a verse which has close similarities with 32:2, it is parallel to עֵצָה. RSV translates it as "judgment", a suitable rendering considering that the word always means "judges" in the plural. BDB [813] translates it as "making decisions". Irwin [19] suggests "soddenness" reading פִּלֵּל as בִּלֵּל.

### Verse 8

שֻׁלְחָן: In the OT the word occurs in one of two contexts: firstly, it can denote a table from which to eat; it can be found in the context of a feast; and it can signify friendship, loyalty as in the phrase "to eat from one's table". Texts which fall into this category are Judg 1:4; 2 Sam 9:7-13; 1 Kgs 2:7; 5:7; 10:5; 13:20; 18:19; 2 Kgs 4:10; 20:29; Neh 5:17; Ps 128:3; Prov 9:2; Ez 23:41. In 3 texts it is Yahweh who lays the table: Ps 23:5; 78:19; Job 36:16. Two of the three uses of the word in Isaiah (21:5 and 65:11) fall into this first category.

The second context where the word appears is the cultic one and here it generally means "altar". Ex 23:41; 25:23-30; 26:35; 30:27; 31:8; 35:13; 37:10,16; 39:36; 40:4,22,24; Num 3:31; 4:7; 1 Chron 28:16; 2 Chron

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1. Elsewhere it occurs in 1 Sam 25:31; Ps 140:9; 144:13; Prov 3:13; 8:35; 12:2; 18:22; Jer 10:4.



4:19; 13:11; 28:16; 29:18; 1 Kgs 7:48; Ez 40:39-42; 41:22; 44:16; Mal 1:7; 1:12 fall into this category. In Isa 28:8, the word has a cultic significance.

קיא: 1QIsa reads קיה but Wildberger, [1053] notes that this is probably a careless transcription. The verb occurs in Lev 18:25,28; 20:22; Job 20:15; Prov 23:8; 25:16; Jer 25:27; Jonah 2:11. The noun occurs in Prov 26:11; Isa 19:14; 28:8; Jer 48:26. The closest text to Isa 28:8 is 19:14 which contains some of the vocabulary of 28:7-8 (קיא, תעה, שבר) and the image of drunkenness. In Jer 25:27 and 48:26, walking in one's vomit is a mark of defeat for Babylon and Moab before Yahweh.

צאה occurs 3 times in Isaiah (4:4; 28:8; 36:12) and 4 times in the rest of the OT (Deut 23:14; 2 Kgs 18:27; Prov 30:12 and Ez 4:12). The closest text to 28:8 is 4:4. As noted above, 4:2 has similarities with 28:5-6. In 4:4, the "filth" of the daughters of Zion will be washed away by a רוח משפט. This latter phrase is found again in Isaiah only in 28:6. The word צאה, קיא are only found parallel in Isa 28:8.

### Verse 9

ירה: (see also תורה in 30:9). Where the verb ירה occurs in the OT, the subject is either the priests (Deut 17:10; 17:11; 24:8; 33:10; 2 Kgs 12:3; 17:27,28; 2 Chron 15:3; Ez 44:23; Mic 3:11), a prophet (I Sam 9:14; Isa 9:14) (1) or Yahweh (Ex 4:12,15; 15:25; 35:34; Judg 13:8; I Kgs 8:36; 2 Chron 6:27; Job 6:24; 34:32; 36:22; Ps 25:8,12; 27:11; 32:8; 119:33,102; Isa 2:3; 28:9,26; 30:20). Commentators disagree whether the subject of the verb in 28:9 is Yahweh or Isaiah. Those who take the subject as Isaiah [Childs 1967: 28], [Vermeylen 1977: 389], [Clements 1980a: 227], point to

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1. In Lev 10:11, it is the leader Aaron.

v7-8 and state that in v9 the drunk priests and prophets are making fun of Isaiah. Those who take it as Yahweh [Exum 1979: 134], [Petersen 109] point to v26 where Yahweh is the subject.

יָרַע, בִּין: (see EXCURSUS). The verbs pick up the sentiments expressed in the introductory verse (1:3) and in the prophetic commission (6:9-10).

גָּמַל III: The root occurs in Isaiah in 11:8; 18:5; 28:9 (1). Generally the word is used not to denote that the child is at a very tender age but rather that it has reached the stage where it is weaned. In Isa 11:8, it is found parallel to יָנַק. In 18:5 it qualifies the ripening grape (2).

עָתָק: The root occurs very rarely in the OT: in Isa 23:18 where it qualifies "clothing" (RSV translates as "fine clothing"): in 1 Chron 4:22, the phrase עֲתִיקִים הָרַבִּים occurs meaning "ancient matters".

### Verse 10

צָו occurs in Isa 28:10,13 and Hos 5:11. In the latter verse there is a textual difficulty: BHS suggests צֹוֹר. It occurs in the context of the destruction of Ephraim as in Isa 28:10.

קָו occurs in 2 Kgs 21:13; 2 Chron 4:2; Job 38:5; Lam 2:8; Ez 47:3 but occurs most often in Isaiah: 18:2,7; 28:10,13,17; 34:11,17. The basic meaning of the word is "measuring line". It is nearly always associated not with building but with destruction: 2 Kgs 21:13; Isa 28:10,13,17; 34:11,12; Lam 2:8. In Isa 18:2,7, there is a textual difficulty with the

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1. Elsewhere in Gen 21:8; Num 17:23; 1 Sam 1:22-24; 1 Kgs 11:20; Ps 131:2.
  2. The word בָּסַר is seldom found: Isa 18:5; Jer 31:29; Ez 18:2; Job 15:33.

phrase גוי קו-קו. BHS suggests קוֹקו. In Isa 34:11, Yahweh will stretch over Edom a line of confusion קו תרו and in the same context in 34:17, Yahweh apportions the land with a line בקו to the birds of the air.

Particularly interesting is the occurrence of the word in 2 Kgs 21:13 since only here and in Isa 28:17 are the words משקלת, קו found parallel. 2 Kgs 21:13 sums up in a short phrase the theme of Isaiah 28, namely that Jerusalem's fate will be the same as Ephraim's:

I will stretch over Jerusalem  
the measuring line of Samaria (קו)  
and the plummet of Ahab (משקלת).

זעיר occurs in the OT only in Isa 28:10,13 and in Job 36:2: but מוֹעֵר occurs 4 times in Isaiah (10:25; 16:14; 24:6; 29:17) and nowhere else (see Isa 29:17).

Commentators differ as to the meaning of the verse and the LXX has paraphrased it. Driver [1968a: 55] suggests that קו צו is chosen to echo קיא צאה of v8 and thus to suggest the drunken cries and shouts of the revellers: he has put forward the suggestion that זעיר means "another little drink". Wildberger [1053] states that the passage pictures a drunken schoolteacher who orders his pupils to repeat the alphabet and has come to the letters ק, צ. זעיר is then interpreted as a little child called upon to recite. Kaiser [1974: 245] emends שם to שים and translates as "Boy, be careful", retaining the imagery of the schoolmaster and his pupil. Van Selms [332-39] reads in v10 and 13 a transposition of the Assyrian *sī lūsū qî luqqi\u, sehêru šeme*, ("Go out, let him go out, wait, let him wait, listen slave"). Vermeeylen [1977: 389] sums up the general interpretation of the verse thus:

"Because the people refuse to listen, Yahweh will make them understand the urgency of his message by

the incomprehensibility of the Assyrian invader".

Halpern [114-15] suggests that קו and צו refer back to קי and צאה of v8. Isaiah lampoons the priests in v10 by making them use babyisms for excreta - צו, קו for the full words קי, צאה. Isaiah equates the priests' rituals, characterized by alcohol induced ecstasy, with infantile lack of control. His accusation of ritualism is the more devastating insofar as it equates temple ritual with feculence, legislated against in such texts as Deut 23:14. Jackson [94] interprets the passage similarly and appeals to the Ugaritic text RS 24:258 which describes a banquet for the gods at which El drinks to satiety, becomes hopelessly drunk and has to be helped home where he encounters a creature with horns and tail and finally falls in his own excrement.

### Verse 11

לעג: Words from the root occur most consistently in Psalms (1), in Proverbs (2) and in Job (3). Elsewhere it occurs in isolated texts (4). The word always means "to deride, scorn, make a laughing stock". In Isaiah the noun occurs in 28:11 and the verb in 33:19. Isa 33:19 picks up the vocabulary of 28:11:

28:11:	לעגי שפה, לשון אחרת
33:19:	נלעג לשון, עמקי שפה

In effect, 33:19 offers an antithesis to 28:11.

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1. The verb in 2:4; 22:8; 59:9; 80:7. The noun in 35:16; 44:14; 79:4; 123:4.
  2. The verb in 1:26; 17:5; 30:17.
  3. The verb in 9:23; 11:3; 21:3; 22:19.
  4. 2 Kgs 19:21; 2 Chron 30:10; Neh 2:19; 3:33; Jer 20:7; Ez 23:32; 36:4; Hos 7:16.

אחרת: The adjective אחר occurs only in Isaiah in 28:10 and in Second Isaiah in 42:8; 48:11; 65:15,22. In the context of 28:10, its meaning is clear as "foreign, external". Wildberger [1060] understands this to refer to the Assyrians. In 36:11, the Assyrians are asked to use their usual tongue, Aramaic.

יִרְבֵּר: The imperfect of רבר occurs in First Isaiah in 28:11; 29:4; 32:6. The subject varies: Yahweh in 28:11; the distressed people in 29:4 and the fool in 32:6. The noun רבר features prominently in chs 28-32: the phrase רבר-יהוה occurs in 28:13,14. The phrase רברי-הספר occurs in 29:11,18. The רבר is despised in 30:12 but is heard again in 30:21. In 29:21, רבר is used in the context of a crime: the ruthless can destroy the poor with a word.

The word of Yahweh is more commonly introduced in chs 28-33 by אמר: 28:12; 29:13; 29:22; 30:12; 30:15; 31:4; 33:10. In 30:1 and 31:9, it is introduced by נאם-יהוה. The words of Yahweh and of the people play a central role in chs 28-33. The interest in direct speech makes 28:11-13; 28:14-18 and 30:10-12 similar. In 28:11-13, the words which Yahweh speaks in v12 become the agent of destruction. In 28:14-18, the words of Yahweh condemn the attitude of the people (v16f), using the people's own words from v15. In 30:10-11, the direct speech of the people introduced by אמר and the fact that they despise this word (הרבר הזה) is the cause of their downfall. In 30:15, the direct words of Yahweh are opposed by the direct words of the people in v16. The two sets of direct speech (that of Yahweh and the people) sustain the conflict of two different wills throughout the section.

העם הזה: Wildberger [1061] notes the deep disappointment inherent in the tone of the phrase, particularly in 6:9. Laberge [1977: 271-79] has an

extended excursus on the phrase: it occurs 50 times in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomic history and 31 times in Jeremiah. He concludes that it is not specifically Deuteronomic. It is used in two ways, either with a positive sense or with a critical connotation. The phrase occurs 10 times in Isaiah - always, according to Laberge, concerning the population of Jerusalem and always in a bad sense. Watts [363] thinks that this conclusion is very questionable. He points out that in 6:9-10, the reference is ambiguous and that in 8:6,11,12, the reference points to the Northern Kingdom, Israel. The reference in 28:11 is to Ephraim. It is only in 29:13-14 that the context favours an identification with Jerusalem.

### Verse 12

נוח: Ironically, the verb that is used in v2 to denote the end of Ephraim is now used in v12 to denote the rest and security to be found in Yahweh. Wildberger [1060], referring to Ps 132:8,14, sees Zion as the resting place of Yahweh. He takes the presence of מנוחה in 32:18 as evidence that in the post-Isaian tradition the word was used eschatologically. Gonçalves [193] and Hunter [228] state that v12a must be understood in the light of the Zion tradition and not in the light of the tradition of the possession of the land. He takes the two words מרגוע, מנוחה to signify Jerusalem as a place of rest. Irwin [23-24] draws attention to the concentric nature of v12:

אשר אמר אליהם	A
זאת המנוחה	B
הניחו לעיף	C
זאת המרגאה	B
לא אבו שמוע	A

If v12 is chiasmic, the emphasis falls on social responsibility. Obtaining rest *הניחו לעיף זאת המנוחה* depends upon giving rest *הניחו לעיף*.

Irwin's observations are to be preferred to those of Roberts [49-51]: he argues that a close comparison with 30:15 shows that a half line is missing in 28:12. He restores the "missing" half line as *הרגיעו לאביון* "let the needy repose". The half line fell out due to haplography because *לאביון* was similar to the following phrase *ולא אבוא*. Roberts supports his claim by citing Ps 132:13-15 where Zion is the resting place (*מנוחת*) for the needy (*אביונה*).

Mosca [116] suggests that the half line is *intentionally* missing: we, the poetic audience, expect to hear something reassuring but that reassurance is missing because "they", the poetic audience, walked out in mid-oracle and refused to listen. Thus while the quotation within the verse ends up being asymmetrical, the verse itself is perfectly symmetrical and is concentrically built up as Irwin suggests.

Hunter [228] sees v12 as an example of an unheeded exhortation from the past which serves an accusatory function in the judgment speech. A further example of an unheeded exhortation is found in 28:16 where Isaiah calls forth out of an earlier tradition a standard by which the present actions of Judah can be deemed contrary to Yahweh's will.

*עיף* occurs in Isa 5:27; 28:12; 29:8; 32:2; 46:1. The closest parallels occur in 32:2; Ps 143:6; Jer 31:25, where Yahweh gives rest to the weary (see 29:8).

*רגע* II occurs in Deut 28:65; Ps 35:20; Isa 34:14; 51:4; Jer 31:2; 47:6; 50:34. The noun *מרגעה* occurs in Job 21:13; Isa 28:12; Jer 6:16. To walk in the way of Yahweh ensures rest (6:16), an offer which the people refuse to

accept. Yahweh does not give rest to those who do not perform all the words of the Law (Deut 28:65). In Jer 50:34, Yahweh gives rest to the earth but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon. The roots עָנָה and נָחַם occur together only in Isa 28:12 and Deut 28:65.

לֹא אָבוּ: The five times where the verb occurs in Isaiah (1:19; 28:12; 30:9,15; 42:24) have all to do with being willing or unwilling to hear Yahweh's word or to follow his ways. It occurs with שָׁמַע in 1:19; 28:12; 30:9. Elsewhere in the OT, it is commonly found with שָׁמַע (1).

### Verse 13

כָּשַׁל: The verb occurs in Isa 3:8; 5:27; 8:15; 28:13; 31:3; 35:3; 40:30; 59:10,14; 63:13. The contexts which most resemble those of 28:13 are 3:8; 8:15; 31:3. In 3:8, the reason why Jerusalem has stumbled is that the speech and deeds of the people are against Yahweh. In chs 28-33, the words of the people are often their downfall. In 8:15, the same verbs are used as in 28:13. In 8:14, Yahweh becomes a rock of stumbling (צוּר מְכַשֵּׁל) to both houses of Israel - a theme important in ch 28. In 31:3, the verb כָּשַׁל also denotes the destruction of the people by Yahweh.

שָׁבַר: The verb is used in Isa 8:15; 14:5,29; 21:9; 24:10; 27:11; 28:13; 30:14; 38:13; 42:3; 45:2; 61:1; 66:9. Within chs 28-33, the verb is used in 30:14 to denote the breaking of the potter's vessel.

יָקַשׁ occurs in Isaiah in 8:15; 28:13; 29:21. Elsewhere it occurs in Deut 7:25; Ps 9:57; 124:7; 141:9; Prov 6:2; Qoh 9:12; Jer 50:24. The general

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1. Lev 26:21; Deut 13:9; Josh 24:10; Judg 19:25; 20:13; 2 Sam 13:14,16; 1 Kgs 20:8; Ez 3:7; 20:8.



meaning of the word is "to ensnare". It is particularly associated with the "evil ones", e.g. Ps 9:17; 124:7; 141:9. This is the case also in Isa 29:21. In Isa 8:15; 28:13, שָׁקַף forms part of the series of verbs mentioned above.

לִכְנֹךְ occurs in Isaiah in 8:15; 20:1; 24:18; 28:13. Apart from 8:15 and 28:13, the verb is only found in two other late texts, 20:1 and 24:18.

## CONTEXT

An analysis of v7-13 favours the view of Childs [1967: 28] and Kaiser [1974: 243-44] that a post-exilic redactor united independent sayings from different periods and situations into a composite unit. In their present context, v7-8 no longer primarily concern a condemnation of the drunkenness of the cultic prophet and priest: the introductory phrase וְגַם אֱלֹהֵי links these verses to v1-4 where drunkenness symbolizes weakness and confusion. The vocabulary of v7-8 lends itself to a figurative reading; drunkenness is seen in the sense of erring, straying from Yahweh. שָׁגָה (v7) is used of going astray in Job 6:24; 19:4; Prov 5:23; 20:1; 28:10. Elsewhere in Isaiah where תָּעָה, בָּלָעוּ are found together, the sense is metaphorical and used to describe the way in which the people are led astray from Yahweh (3:12; 9:15). Similarly whatever the origin of v10, its meaning within the present context is subordinated to the theme of drunkenness and suggests confusion and lack of clarity.

The rhetorical question in v9a is pivotal in interpreting the theme of drunkenness and confusion; with its key verbs, שָׁמַע, בִּין, יָרַע, יָרָה, it implies that the general confusion is due to a lack of knowledge, understanding and a willingness to hear the word of Yahweh. The question raised in v9a is only very gradually resolved in the succeeding



chapters. Even though the instruction of Yahweh is beneficial and productive (28:26), it is nevertheless despised (30:9) and only in 30:20 is the role of Yahweh as teacher truly perceived.

Hearing the message (שמועה) of Yahweh is central to leaving behind confusion and coming to knowledge and understanding: but in v11-12, the people refuse to hear - each time לא אנו occurs in First Isaiah, it denotes an unwillingness to hear or to follow Yahweh. In v14, the scoffers are summoned to hear his word but they do not listen and act on it. For them, it is sheer terror to understand the message: v19c partly answers the question of v9a. Only the prophet himself fully hears the terrible message (v22). In v23, there is a universal summons to hear, listen and learn from the fate of Ephraim (v1-4) and Jerusalem (v14-22) who both refused to hear Yahweh's word.

The rhetorical question in v9 is pivotal also in that the verbs ידע, בן, pick up the commission of the prophet in 6:9-10 and the introductory complaint against the people in 1:3. In chs 28-33, there is an attempt to resolve the difficult commission and its very negative implications. Understanding does take place in 29:24 and 33:19. The association of the two verbs ידע, בן elsewhere with wisdom vocabulary (see EXCURSUS) prepares the reader for the wisdom parable of v23-29 so that the attributes of Yahweh in v29b (הפליא עצה, הגדיל תושיה) offer conclusive evidence that only Yahweh can teach knowledge and understanding.

Although, originally, the priest and prophet may have been condemned for their abuse of alcohol, in the present context, it is in their function as instructors and upholders of justice that they have

failed. Yahweh is the true instructor and the true spirit of justice (רוח משפט) while the prophet and priest judge inaccurately (פקו פלילה). The view that v5-6 may have been consciously placed beside v7-8 to contrast the attribute of Yahweh as a רוח משפט with the failure of the priest and prophet to deliver justice may be supported by the fact that the phrase רוח משפט (v6) is found only elsewhere in First Isaiah in 4:4 and the word צאה (v8) only occurs elsewhere in First Isaiah in the same verse where the filth (צאה) of the daughters of Zion will be washed away by a spirit of justice (רוח משפט).

In v12-13, the confusion which results from the refusal to listen to Yahweh leads to destruction. In the context, the term העם הזה is a convenient term with suitable negative overtones to denote Ephraim (v1-4), the priest and people (v7-8) and those who refuse to hear (v12b). The roots נוח, רגע (v12) occur together only in Deut 28:65 where Yahweh gives rest to those who listen and carry out the words of the Law.

Finally, those who refuse to hear the word of Yahweh are associated with the wicked. While the weary (עֵי) are looked after by Yahweh (Isa 32:2; Ps 143:6; Jer 31:25), the wicked are ensnared (יִקַּשׁ), a verb often used of their own activities (Isa 29:21; Ps 9:17; 124:7; 141:9).

Isaiah 28: 14-22

## INTRODUCTION

The kernel of the unit v14-18 is attributed to Isaiah by most scholars (1). V19-22 are seen as additions which actualize or interpret v14-18, although Wildberger [1078-79] sees no compelling reasons why v20-21 cannot be attributed to Isaiah. Clements [1980a: 230] sees in v19 two separate additions and states that v22 is an eschatological gloss. Childs [1967: 31] argues that v20-22 is an independent oracle joined redactionally in such a way as to offer a commentary on the preceding passage.

Vermeylen [1977: 397] sees v19-20 as belonging together but treats v21 and 22 separately. V19a actualizes v14-18 for a new historical context. V19b links v14-18 with v7-13. V19b must be seen in the light of Jer 29:18 which also puts the rare word זועה in relation to refusing to hear the words of the prophets. V19-20 have their origin in Deuteronomic theology. V21 is linked with 29:1-4. It may be a redactional verse to anticipate 29:1-4 or perhaps originally preceded 29:1-4 and consequently became separated by v23-29 and then by v22 (2). V22 confers upon v14-21 an apocalyptic sense which is post-exilic. It picks up its vocabulary from the rest of the chapter: לוץ (v14 and v22); חרץ (v22 and v27); מאת ארני יהוה (v22 and v29).

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1. Childs [1967: 30], Kaiser [1974: 250], Vermeylen [1977: 391], and Wildberger [1068-69].
  2. Petersen [113] suggests that since Yahweh destroyed the enemy with hail at Gibeon and with the breaking of water at Baal-Perazim, the purpose of v21 is to recall to the reader that previously Yahweh had destroyed Israel's enemies by these means.

The phrase כלה ונחרצה על-כל-הארץ expresses the irrevocable decision of Yahweh to destroy on a fixed day the pagan world – only Israel will be pardoned.

Kaiser [1974: 251-52] sees in v14-22 three separate stages. Firstly, there is a prophecy of Isaiah consisting of v14-15, 16a $\alpha$ , 17b-18. Secondly, a pre-exilic redactor, who also worked on 30:8-17, added 16a $\beta$ b, 17a. Thirdly the passage was re-interpreted eschatologically by the addition of v20-22. It is impossible for Kaiser to say when v19 was added.

The Isaianic core of v14-18 is generally dated to the years between 713-705 BC. Form critical studies have emphasized the invective-threat form of v14-18 and it is on form critical grounds that the authenticity of v16-17a has been seriously questioned. Childs [1967: 28f] typifies such an approach. He sees the oracle beginning in the classical invective-threat pattern: the call to attention followed by a direct reference to the addressees described in participial clauses. However, words of promise follow in v16 where a threat is expected. Childs therefore believes that the position of v16-17a reflects a secondary redaction because the invective-threat form is the most frequent in the prophets and there is no other example where a promise is introduced into such a form. V16-17a was originally a promise oracle in which Isaiah built upon the old Zion tradition. The purpose of placing the promise oracle here was to create a contrast between those who seek their own safety through clever pacts which amounts to false security and the true safety of Yahweh in Zion.

Vermeulen [1977: 392-93] also sees v16-17a as the work of a redactor

who not only was responsible for its position here but who actually composed it. The Isaian oracle originally consisted of v14-16a $\alpha$ , 17b-18. In 16a $\alpha\beta$ -17, a distinction is made between the attitude of the people and "he who believes". The addition introduces the motif of the cosmic mountain and emanates from the circle of the pious Jews at the time of the Second Temple. He sees in the words  $\text{יְהוָה}$  and  $\text{יִשְׂרָאֵל}$  references to the pious Jews. By adding these verses, the redactor has established a distinction: not everyone will be destroyed, he who believes will be saved and the true believer will escape the general massacre.

Jeppesen [94] attributes v16-17a to Deutero-Isaiah who arranged the material of First-Isaiah into a pattern which he wanted his contemporaries to relate to. Originally v17 followed after v15 - all that is needed is a short phrase after  $\text{וְיָגֵן}$  to introduce v17. Deutero-Isaiah has replaced the original phrase with the present v16. The cornerstone of v16 is not a metaphorical symbol of trust but refers to a real block of stone. The point of placing v16 in its present position is to show that the rock which Yahweh has placed in Zion has not been moved, it is still there and this gives the people hope.

The exclusion of v16-17a from the original oracle merely on form critical grounds has been contested most strongly by Wildberger [1069], Clements [1980a: 229] and particularly Gonçalves [197-99]. Their position is that they see in these verses a promise made by Yahweh in the past and therefore something which adds greater weight to the threat. Just because no other oracle has quite the same mix of threat and promise is no argument against its authenticity - indeed it may well be an argument in its favour. Wildberger sees v16-17a as the start of the threat: the stone is an instrument of judgment similar to the line and

plummet. According to Clements, the purpose of v16-17a is to contrast Yahweh's way of salvation with the false way chosen by the leaders of Judah. The very rock of their foundation will become a "testing", something against which their fidelity will be measured.

Gonçalves [197] attempts to show how v16-17a forms an integral part of v14-18:

<u>v15</u>		<u>v16-17a</u>	
כי אמרתם	15aα	לכן כה אמר אדני יהוה	16aα
ברתנו ברית עשינו חזה	15aβ	הנני יסר .. מוסר מוסר	16aβ.bα
שיט שוטף לא יבואנו	15bα	המאמין לא יחיש	16bβ
כי שמנו כזב מחסנו	15bα	ושמתי משפט לקו	17a
ובשקר נסתרנו		וצרקה למשקלת	

He sees the quotation of the leaders (v15) as directly opposed to the quotation of Yahweh (v16-17a): the word of the leaders (v15aα) is opposed to Yahweh's word (v16aα). Their search for security (v15aβ) is opposed to the action of Yahweh in laying a stone of solid foundation (v16aβ. bα). To their hope of obtaining a shelter (v15bα) is contrasted the stability of that which holds firm (v16bβ). To the lies which are their refuge (v15bβ) are opposed justice and right which Yahweh will take as his line and plummet (v17a).

Gonçalves attempts to show that since v15 is linked to v17b-18 and since v16-17a is linked to v15, all three parts must have formed an integral unit. He concludes that such a carefully <sup>constructed</sup> piece as v16-17a could not have been the work of a later redactor.

However, it is possible that a later redactor could have spotted the

potential that such an opposition of ideas presented when he inserted v16-17a. Also it is difficult to see how a former promise can add weight to a threat - in such a case there must always remain a strong element of condition and hope. On the other hand, Gonçalves [198] is right to interpret the *function* of v16-17a in the light of 28:7b-13 and 30:15-17. The quotation of Yahweh puts forward the condition for salvation and the quotation of the people illustrates their refusal to accept. Gonçalves attributes all of v14-18 to Isaiah. However, one can also start from the present form of the text where there is a great emphasis in ch 28 on hearing or refusing to hear. Such an emphasis (which probably came much later than Isaiah - if v19b is regarded as late and since the emphasis on hearing is only perceived in ch 28 as a *whole* and not in its individual sections) may have motivated a redactor to introduce v16-17a as key words of Yahweh. It is important that authoritative words of Yahweh are included and highlighted because later in chs 28-33, the people will fail to understand such words, murmur against them or simply refuse to hear.

A later redactor could have inserted v16-17a in such a way as to retain the ambiguity: it does not take away the threat but rather offers words which have been refused by the leaders of Jerusalem. The insertion of the words of Yahweh can be seen as an instructional technique in that such words are valid for all time: the leaders refused to hear and their fate reflected their stupidity. Hearing and understanding the word of Yahweh on the other hand ensures salvation but this involves wisdom to understand the message.



## VOCABULARY

Verse 14

לצון: The noun צל occurs only once in prophetic literature. It occurs 15 times in Proverbs and in Ps 1:1 where it introduces the wisdom psalm (see 29:20). The verb occurs in the hithpael only in 28:22 and the hiphil is found once in Isaiah in 43:27 (1). The noun לצון occurs in Prov 1:22; 29:8. As a wisdom word, צל is used as an antithesis of the wise and righteous. The word is defined in Prov 21:24: "scoffer" (2) is the name given to the proud haughty man who acts with arrogant pride. Gonçalves [202] discusses the possibility of two roots: one suggesting the lack of wisdom and the other, in the hiphil, denoting interpretation. On 28:14 he agrees with McKane [1970: 273] that the word means "to speak indirectly or in an oblique fashion" and that it refers to the arrogance of the leaders of Jerusalem. The presence of the hithpael in v22 serves as an *inclusio* with לצון in v14.

משל I, meaning "to rule", occurs in Isaiah in 3:4,12; 14:5; 16:1; 19:4; 28:14; 40:10; 49:7; 52:5; 63:19. משל II meaning "to be similar", "to put forward a parable" occurs in 14:4,10, 46:5. None of the latter texts provide any weighty evidence that in 28:14 the verb should be taken as משל II. Gonçalves [202] notes that משל II, common in Ezekiel (3) never appears in Wisdom writings where the verb is always used in the sense of "to

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1. It occurs elsewhere in Gen 42:23; 2 Chron 32:31; Job 16:20; 33:23; Ps 119:51; Prov 3:34; 14:9; 19:28.
  2. Wildberger [1072] notes that the translation of צל as scoffer is inexact: more particularly it is a term which denotes the opposite of the poor and humble. He refers to Prov 3:34; 9:8; 14:6; 15:11; 19:25; 21:11,24; Ps 1:1 where the word is always the antithesis of a term meaning poor or humble.
  3. Ez 12:23; 14:44; 17:2; 18:2,3; 21:5; 24:3.

govern" (1). In Isaiah it also means to govern, according to Gonçalves, except in 3:4,12 and 14:5,10 - texts which are secondary. Wildberger [1072] notes that other references to politics seem to favour "to rule" (LXX has ἀρχοντες in 28:14), but the parallel with לָצוֹן favours "to speak in parables". He suggests that the passage is directed not at politicians but at the counsellors of Jerusalem's policies - an interpretation which tries to include both meanings. Irwin [25] attempts to include both meanings with his translation "reigning wits". But Vermeylen [1977: 391] makes the point that לָצוֹן does not make a good parallel to מַשַּׁל precisely because the word always means "to govern" in Isaiah: he suggests that since Isaiah uses מַשַּׁל only in the sense of "to rule", he would not have used לָצוֹן as a parallel to it in 28:14. He suggests that the phrase אֲנִשֵּׁי-לָצוֹן is an addition: it is a witness to a new interpretation of v14-22 in accordance with v7-13. In other words, a later redactor read the verb as מַשַּׁל II, thus changing the perspective from that of the guilt of the leaders to an emphasis on how the word of Yahweh has been scorned by the plans and ideas of man - an idea conveyed again by the hithpael of the verb in v22.

אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם: Vermeylen [1977: 391-92] notes that Isaiah never uses the phrase "this people who are in Jerusalem". It occurs only in Jer 29:25 and 34:8 - texts which Vermeylen attributes to the Deuteronomist. אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם may be an addition made in the light of v16-17a. It anticipates the theme of Zion. In v14, the leaders of this people are in Jerusalem and in v16 Yahweh has laid a stone in Zion. The irony may be that although they are in Jerusalem the arrogant leaders fail to recognize the strength of their position based on Yahweh and his choice of Zion.

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1. Prov 6:7; 12:24; 16:32; 17:2; 19:10; 22:7; 23:1; 28:15; 29:2,12,26.

Exum [1979: 137] has drawn attention to a possible pun on לצוֹן and צִיּוֹן - thus connecting the scoffer, לָץ, with what he underestimates - the security of Zion, צִיּוֹן.

### Verse 15

כָּרַת: In Isaiah, the verb is found in the qal in 14:8; 18:5; 28:15; 44:14; 55:3; 57:8; 61:8; in the niphal in 1:13; 22:25; 29:20; 48:19; 55:13; 56:5; in the hiphil in 9:13; 10:7; 14:22; 48:9. It has the basic meaning "to cut down", e.g. trees or plants as in 9:13; 14:8; 18:5; 44:14; but this is superseded by its figurative meaning "to cut down" in the sense of utterly destroying. In 28:15; 55:3; 61:8, the verb is used with בְּרִית meaning "to make a covenant".

בְּרִית occurs frequently in Second Isaiah (1). In all instances, it concerns the covenant with Yahweh. Isa 59:21 is interesting since it is opposite in tone to ch 28. It defines the covenant in terms of the words of Yahweh always remaining faithful in the mouth of the people and their descendants. This contrasts with the devious speech patterns of the people in ch 28.

In First Isaiah בְּרִית occurs in 24:5; 28:15,18; 33:8. Isa 24:5 is a late text and refers to the covenant of Yahweh. In 33:8 the word may denote a human agreement but it is not impossible that it could refer to the covenant with Yahweh (see 33:8). Isa 28:15,18 is therefore the only instance where a covenant is made with Sheol - consequently it contrasts very sharply with the covenant of Yahweh to which the word normally refers.

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1. Isa 42:6; 49:8; 54:10; 55:3; 56:4,6; 59:21; 61:8.

חזה: Most commentators, including Wildberger [1064] and Vermeylen [1977: 395], agree that the word in this verse means something like "treaty" or "pact" since it is parallel to "covenant". The LXX translates the word as *συνθηκας* and BDB's translation "agreement" [302] opts for the same idea. Syr *hzw'* takes up another meaning of the root, "vision".

מות: In Isaiah, the word is often used in connection with Yahweh. He has power over the dead in 26:14,19; 51:14; 65:20; 66:24. He can use death as his instrument because it is within his power: 11:4; 14:30; 22:14,18; 50:2; 51:6; 65:5. Eventually he will swallow up death forever in 25:8. In 8:19, the mediums are condemned for consulting the dead. Within this perspective, the futility of making a covenant with death is clearly seen; it is futile to make an alliance with something over which Yahweh has complete control. Duhm [176] followed by later commentators, e.g. Vermeylen [1977: 395] has emphasized the relationship of Mot and Sheol to the Egyptian god of the dead, Osiris. Clements [1980a: 230], on the other hand, emphasizes the satirical language in the passage rather than seeing specific intentional references to Mot and Sheol.

שְׁאוֹל occurs in Isaiah in 5:14; 7:11; 14:9,11,15; 28:15,18; 38:10,18; 57:9. The word שְׁאוֹל is found in 10:29. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, the word occurs in Ez 31:15,17; 32:21,27; Amos 9:2; Hab 2:5. It is found mainly in the Psalms (15 times), in Proverbs (9 times) and in Job (8 times). It occurs rarely in the Pentateuch, thus making its occurrence rather remarkable in the Song of Moses (Deut 32:22), in the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:6) and the Song of David (2 Sam 22:6).

In prophetic literature as in the Psalms, שְׁאוֹל is often associated with Yahweh, referring to his control over Sheol or his ability to send

people there or to bring them back. In First Isaiah (5:14; 7:11; 14:9,11,15) it is the depth of Sheol which is emphasized. In 7:11 it is used as part of a simile to express the opposite of heaven. In 5:14; 14:9,11,15, the depth and lowliness of Sheol are juxtaposed with the haughty pride and arrogance of the leaders, thus providing an effective counterbalance. Their lofty pride will be thrust down to the depth of Sheol. In 28:15,18, it denotes, like מוֹת to which it is parallel, the utter futility of the alliance made by the leaders of Jerusalem.

שִׁיט occurs twice in the OT, in the phrase שִׁיט שׁוֹטֵף in Isa 28:15 and in the phrase שִׁיט-אֲנִי in Isa 33:21. 1QIsa reads שׁוֹט and many commentators emend the word accordingly on the grounds that this is the form found in v18 [Wildberger 1065]. BDB [1002] suggests the translation "scourge" or "whip". Clements [1980a: 230] discusses the suggestion that the phrase refers to the desert rainstorm which Canaanite tradition identified with the storm<sup>1</sup> god Hadad. However the adjective שׁוֹטֵף is more significant than the noun שִׁיט in that it is often associated with water and can often refer to Assyria (see v2). The noun שִׁיט may be used merely for the purposes of assonance and alliteration.

כִּזָּב: The noun occurs in Isaiah only in 28:15,17 and the verb in 57:11; 58:11. The noun occurs frequently in Psalms (1) and Proverbs (2) referring to the deceitful who thrive on lies. Sometimes the futility of such an action is stressed e.g. Ps 4:3; 40:5; 62:10. In prophetic literature, the noun occurs in Jer 15:18; Ez 13:6-19; 21:34; 22:28; Dan 11:27; Hos

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1. Ps 4:3; 5:7; 40:5; 58:4; 62:5,10.

2. Prov 6:19; 14:5,25; 19:5,9,22; 21:28; 23:13; 30:8.

7:13; 12:2; Mic 1:14; Zeph 3:13 (1). Sometimes the futility of deceit is highlighted e.g. Jer 15:18; Mic 1:14. In Ezekiel, the noun always refers to the deceitfulness of the false prophets or of their visions and divinations. The context of Zeph 3:13 is almost the reverse of Isa 28:14-18. In Zeph 3:11-13, the proudly exulting ones shall be removed from Yahweh's lofty mountain. The remnant shall seek refuge (חסה) in Yahweh and they shall utter no lies (כזב): all of which offer an antithesis to Isa 28:14-18.

שקר occurs often in Psalms (22 times), Proverbs (19 times) but particularly in Jeremiah (33 times). It occurs parallel to כזב in Prov 6:19; 14:5; 19:5,19. In Isaiah it occurs in 9:14; 28:15; 32:7; 44:20; 57:4; 59:2,13. In 9:14 כזב is used of the prophet who teaches lies, a theme more common outside Isaiah (2). The context of אמרי-שקר in 32:7 brings to mind the vocabulary of Ex 23:6-7 and Prov 17:7 (see 32:7).

חסה: The verb occurs 24 times in the Psalms (3) and the noun 12 times (4). In the Psalms, it is always in Yahweh where refuge is sought. This is also the case in Ruth 2:12; 2 Sam 22:3,31; Neh 1:7; Prov 14:26; 30:5; Jer 17:17; Joel 4:16; Zeph 3:12. In Deut 32:37, the people are chided for seeking shelter in false gods and not in Yahweh.

In Isaiah, the verb occurs in 14:32; 30:2, 57:13 and the noun in 4:6; 25:4; 28:15,17. The noun חסות occurs in 30:3. In 14:32; 25:4; 57:13, it is

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1. Elsewhere in the OT, the noun only occurs in Judges 16:10,13 where Delilah accuses Samson of being deceitful.
  2. e.g. 1 Kgs 22:23; 2 Chron 18:21,22; Jer 6:13; 7:4,8; 8:8,10; 14:14; 23:25,32; 27:10; 28:15; 29:21,23,31; Ez 13:22; Mic 2:11.
  3. Ps 2:12; 5:12; 7:2; 11:1; 16:1; 17:7; 18:3,31; 25:20; 31:2; 34:9,13; 36:8; 37:10; 57:2; 61:5; 64:11; 71:1; 91:4; 118:8,9; 141:8; 144:2.
  4. Ps 14:6; 46:2; 61:4; 62:8,9; 71:7; 73:28; 91:2,9; 94:22; 104:18; 142:6.

Yahweh where refuge is sought; in 4:6 it is Mount Zion, the dwelling place of Yahweh. Isa 28:15,17 and 30:2,3 offer a contrast to this: in 28:15,17, the people seek refuge in lies and in 30:2,3, they seek refuge in Egypt - the futility of their refuge provides a marked contrast to seeking refuge in Yahweh.

סתר: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 8:17; 16:3; 29:14,15; and the noun occurs in 16:4; 28:15,17; 32:2. Isa 32:2 offers an antithesis to 28:15,17 in that Yahweh now becomes the true shelter (see 32:1-2 for the discussion that the images there may be applied to Yahweh). In ch 28, Yahweh uses hail ברר and water מים to overwhelm the shelter סתר, while in 32:2, he is a refuge סתר from the storm זרם and like a stream of water פלג-מים, water now symbolizing prosperity and peace.

### Verse 16

יסד: The verb occurs most often in the Psalms (1). Next to the Psalms, it occurs most often in Isaiah - 14:32; 23:13; 28:16; 44:28; 48:13; 51:13,16; 54:11. In the OT, the verb is used normally in the context of Yahweh founding the heavens and the earth (2). It is used quite frequently to denote the founding of the Temple or Zion (3).

Isa 14:32 and 28:16 are the only texts which specifically concern "Zion". There are obvious similarities between the two texts: the use of

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1. Ps 2:2; 8:3; 24:2; 31:14; 78:69; 89:12; 102:26; 104:5,8; 119:152.
  2. Job 38:4; Ps 8:3; 24:2; 78:69; 89:12; 102:26; 104:5,8; Prov 3:19; Isa 48:13; 51:13,16; Amos 9:6; Zech 12:1.
  3. 1 Kgs 5:31; 6:37; 7:10; 2 Chron 3:3; Esra 3:6,10,11,12; Isa 14:32; 28:16; 44:28; Ez 41:8; Hag 2:18; Zech 8:9. The verb is also used to denote the founding of Jericho (Josh 6:26; 1 Kgs 16:34), Egypt (Ex 9:18) and Assyria (Isa 23:13).

the verbs יָסַד and חָסַד. The main difference is in the construction of the verses: whereas the object of the verb is צִיּוֹן in 14:32, it is אֶבֶן in 28:16 since צִיּוֹן has the preposition בַּ and thus becomes the indirect object. Irwin [31] and Gonçalves [213] regard בַּ as *essentiae* and translate "I have founded Zion as a stone". The third relevant text in Isaiah is 44:28 where the Temple will be founded הִכֵּל תִּנָּסֵד.

The verb can be used to denote the founding of something abstract. This is the case in Ps 119:152 where the "testimonies of Yahweh" are founded. This may be relevant if the cornerstone in Isa 28:16 is interpreted in an abstract sense. The MT reads יָסַד which is the 3rd person singular masculine piel perfect but the MT is isolated from the rest of the versions: 1QIsa has מִיָּסַד, a piel participle and 1QIsa<sup>β</sup> has יָסַד a qal participle. The other versions support the pointing of the word as יָסַד, the qal participle and most commentators correct the massoretic vocalization. Roberts [1987: 30] calls the qal participle with הִנֵּה an example of *futurum instans* and translates "I am about to lay".

Gonçalves [196] retains the MT: it is the *lectio difficilior* and therefore *fortior*. He admits that הִנֵּה followed by a 3rd person perfect cannot be found with any certainty in the OT. Isa 29:14 and 38:5 pose an identical problem to 28:16 but הִנֵּה followed by a participle is a very frequent construction in the OT. Gonçalves points out that the latter construction, although it can sometimes express the passive (Gen 41:17), normally expresses the future or present and introduces a threat. Thus many commentators translate "behold I am going to lay...". The MT vocalization is explained by Gonçalves [196] as due to the influence of Isa 14:32 or to the concern of the Naqdanim to avoid the idea of a new foundation beside the Temple or to avoid the messianic interpretation given by Christians to the passage.

Irwin [31] notes that the phrase must be considered a relative clause



without a relative participle to account for the change in person. Gonçalves [196] agrees with Rashi that it is a case of relative asyndeton and translates "Behold it is I who have laid as a foundation....".

מוֹסֵד מוֹסֵד: The MT reads the first form as a noun and the second as a hophal participle "a founded foundation". Wildberger [1066-67] takes the second word as a case of dittography and deletes it.

צִיּוֹן: The theme of the security and stability of Zion and Yahweh's protection of it occurs frequently in First and Second Isaiah (1). Clements [1980b: 94] holds that the Zion tradition is more a consequence of the interpretation placed upon the events of 701 than its presupposition. He believes the tradition flourished in Josiah's reign before being subjected to a great deal of modification and theological development. He attributes [1980b: 96] the emphasis on the inviolability of Zion to the early leaders of the Deuteronomic movement in the reign of Josiah.

Vermeulen [1977: 393], who sees this verse as late, argues that Zion was now no longer equivalent to Jerusalem but denoted the Temple Mount - the focal point of the universe. The motif of foundation was linked to the theme of the stability of the cosmic work of Yahweh (Isa 48:13; 51:13; 51:16; Amos 9:6; Zech 12:12).

In Isa 1:27; 28:16; 33:5, Zion is associated with justice and righteousness which introduces into the theme a conditional element. A conditional element is present also in 59:20 since Yahweh only comes as Redeemer to Zion to those who "turn from transgression".

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1. Isa 4:3,5; 8:18; 10:12; 10:24; 10:32; 12:6; 14:32; 16:1; 18:7; 24:23; 28:16; 29:8; 30:19; 31:4; 31:9; 33:5; 33:20; 34:8; 35:10: in Second Isaiah 40:9; 41:27; 46:13; 51:3,16; 52:1,2,7,8; 59:20; 60:14; 61:3; 62:1,11; 66:8.

Neve [244-45], notes similarities in theme (the paradise river myth, the Zion cult traditions and the theme of Zion as refuge) between Ps 46 and Isa 2:2-3; 8:6 and 28:16-17.

אבן: The noun occurs in the singular in Isaiah in 8:14; 28:16; 30:30; 37:19; 60:17; 62:10. In the plural it occurs in 14:19; 27:9; 34:11; 54:12. In Isa 8:14, Yahweh becomes a stone of offence נֶגֶף אֲבָן to both houses of Israel.

בָּחַן in Isa 28:16 is a pual participle. The same form occurs in Ez 21:18. Apart from the form בָּחַן in 32:14 and בָּחִין in 23:13, the root does not occur elsewhere in Isaiah. It occurs most frequently in the Psalms (1), in Jeremiah (2) and, not surprisingly, in Job considering all his testing trials (3).

In Psalms and Jeremiah the word denotes a testing or trial in the moral sense with a view to correcting any faults (4). Normally Yahweh is the subject of the verb although it is Assyria, Yahweh's instrument in Jer 6:27. The words בָּחַן in Isa 32:14 and בָּחִין in 23:13 are connected with the idea of military installations. Clements [1980a: 231] suggests that the אבן בָּחַן is the stone by which the measurements and shape of other stones are tested. Yahweh has become the rock by which all other guarantees of security are to be measured. Vermeylen [1977: 394] notes that the word בָּחַן is often used in connection with the testing of the

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1. Ps 7:10; 11:4,5; 17:3; 26:2; 66:10; 81:8; 95:9; 139:23.
  2. Jer 6:27; 9:6; 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; 20:12 and the hapax בָּחִין in 6:27.
  3. Job 7:18; 12:11; 23:10; 34:3,36.
  4. This is also the idea associated with the word in Gen 42:15,16; 1 Chron 29:17; Prov 17:3.

just man (Job 33:10; Ps 17:3; 26:2; 139:23). He uses this as part of his cumulative evidence that v16 refers to the community of the just in the Second Temple period. Other commentators follow the lead given by Koehler [390-93] who raised the possibility that the form in 28:16 is an Egyptian loan-word denoting the material of the stone. Roberts [1987: 31] suggests that **בִּתּוֹן** designates schist gneiss used in Egypt for making statues: it should be connected with another Egyptian loanword **בִּתּוֹן** which means "fortress" or "tower" found in Isa 23:13 where **עַל וּבִתּוֹן** is a hendiadys and 32:14 where **בִּתּוֹן** is parallel to **אַרְמֹנָה**. He cites three occurrences of **בִּתּוֹן** in the Qumran literature (1QS 8:7b-8a; 1QH 6:25d-27a; 1QH 7:8-9) which interpret **בִּתּוֹן** in 28:16 in the light of 23:13 and 32:14. All three Qumran passages interpret the word as a place of refuge and so emphasize that the value of the stone lay in its size, weight and strength. However, Wildberger [1066] objects to the introduction of the Qumran material on the grounds that it is merely a matter of free citation but Roberts [34] shows that Rashi, Kimchi, Ibn Ezra also interpret the word as "fortress" or "tower". Roberts [42] suggests that the collapse of the wall in 30:12-14 may refer back to 28:16.

**פִּנֵּה** occurs in Isaiah in 19:13 and 28:16. Elsewhere it is used to describe the corners of the altar (1 Kgs 7:34; Ez 27:2; 43:20), of a house (Prov 1:19) or of a housetop (Prov 21:9; 25:24). It can be a cornerstone (Job 38:6) or refer specifically to the Corner Wall of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 14:13; 2 Chron 26:9,15; Neh 3:24,31,32; Jer 31:38,40). In Isaiah 19:13, the word is used metaphorically as it is in Jer 51:26 which deals with the instability of Babylon.

**יִקְרָה** occurs in Isaiah only in 28:16. The word can mean either "heavy" or

"precious". It appears often in the phrase יָקָרָה אֶבֶן in the singular (1) and in the plural (2). The phrase יָקָרָה פֶּנֶת occurs only in Isa 28:16.

אָמַן: The niphal of the root meaning "steadfast" occurs in Isaiah in 1:21,26; 7:9; 8:2; 22:23,25; 33:16; 49:7; 55:3. The hiphil occurs in 7:9; 28:16; 43:10; 53:1. The noun אָמַן occurs in 25:1 and the noun אֶמֶן in 26:2. The two contexts of the hiphil in First Isaiah, 7:9 and 28:16 are both conditional. Vermeulen [1977: 392] associates this verb specifically with the community of the just in the Second Temple period, arguing that the verb is associated with the just opposed to the wicked in Ps 27:3 and 116:10.

הָיָה: The most consistent use of the qal occurs in the Psalms (3) where the psalmist prays to Yahweh to make haste to help him. Elsewhere the qal occurs in isolated texts from which no clear pattern emerges (4).

The hiphil occurs in Judg 20:37; Ps 55:9; Isa 5:19; 28:16; 60:22. Again no striking similarity exists between the contexts: while in Judg 20:37, the verb denotes the act of rushing towards battle to attack, in Ps 55:9, on the other hand, the psalmist rushes to find refuge and shelter from his enemies. Isa 5:19 contains a taunt against Yahweh that he may speed his work while Isa 60:22 expresses the idea that Yahweh is doing just this.

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1. 1 Kgs 10:2,11; 1 Chron 20:2; 29:2; 2 Chron 3:6; 9:1; 9:9; 9:10; 32:27; Prov 6:26; Ez 27:22; 28:13.
  2. 1 Kgs 5:31; 7:9,10,11.
  3. Ps22:20; 38:23; 40:14; 70:2,6; 71:12; 141:1.
  4. Num 32:17; Deut 32:35; 1 Sam 20:38; Job 20:2; 31:5; Ps 119:60; Qoh 2:25; Isa 8:1,3; Hab 1:8.

Looking at the theme of haste within the Book of Isaiah itself, those who cry out for haste in Yahweh's plans are condemned in 5:19. In 8:1,3, the name of Isaiah's son is **מהר שלל חש בז** which denotes the imminent collapse of Samaria: yet none of these nuances is present in 28:16. Therefore it is better to see **לא חוש** as expressing the same idea as **מנוחה** and **מרגעה** in 28:12. Watts [367] points out a possible meaning for the verb in Qoh 2:25, "to worry", which he thinks is applicable to 28:16. Roberts [1987: 36] argues that **יחיש** refers to the foundation and not to the believer. He quotes 1QS 8:8:

ובל יחישו ממקום

"They (the foundations) will not waver from their position."

With regard to structure, v16b may be at the centre of v14-18 just as v12 is at the centre of v11-13. In other words, the direct words of Yahweh are made the centre of both oracles.

### Verse 17

In v17 and v18 Yahweh turns back the words used by the people in v15. The words **קו** and **משקלת**, only found parallel elsewhere in 2 Kgs 21:13, have a connotation of destruction (see v10). The aspect of destruction is tempered by the words **משפט** and **צדקה** which resonate throughout chs 28-33, suggesting the justice of Yahweh's punishment.

The word **יעה** is a hapax.

### Verse 18

**נפר** occurs in the pual in First Isaiah in 6:7; 22:14; 27:9; 28:12. Except in 28:12 it means "to take away the guilt of one's sin". But Wildberger [1068] calls for a wider meaning of the word to include the meaning "annul" or "cancel". Halpern [119] suggests that the verb was used to

describe the fate of human remains, left on the benches of Israelite crypts, when the identity of the interred was no longer recalled.

### Verse 19

The vocabulary of v19 is more commonly found in the historical books than in prophetic literature.

מֵרִי occurs in Isaiah in 28:19 and 66:23. Elsewhere it occurs in 1 Sam 1:7; 7:16; 18:30; 1 Kgs 14:28; 2 Kgs 4:8; 2 Chron 12:11; 24:5.

בִּקְרָב בִּקְרָב: The phrase occurs in Isaiah in 28:19 and 50:4. Elsewhere it is found in Ex 16:21; 30:7; 36:3; Lev 6:5; 2 Sam 11:14; 1 Chron 23:30; 2 Chron 13:11; Ez 46:13,14,15; Zeph 3:5. The phrase בַּיּוֹם בַּלַּיְלָה occurs once in Isaiah.

רָק occurs in Isaiah only in 4:1 and 28:19. It occurs nowhere else in prophetic literature but regularly in the Pentateuch, 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

זָעָה: The verb from the root occurs in Esth 5:9; Qoh 12:3 and Hab 2:7. In all cases it means "to tremble". The noun occurs in Isaiah once. Elsewhere it is found with the preposition לְ (Deut 28:25; 2 Chron 29:8; Jer 15:4; 24:9; 29:18; 34:17). In each case the noun is used to indicate the agitation or horror which results as a consequence of refusing to hear the word of Yahweh. In Deut 28:25, the people have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh. In 2 Chron 29:8, Judah and Jerusalem have forsaken Yahweh. In Jer 15:4, the people are agitated because of what Manasseh did in Jerusalem. In Jer 24:9, Zedekiah and those who remain in the land will be "agitated". In Jer 29:8, the people are "agitated" because they did not listen to the word of Yahweh through his prophets. In Jer 33:17, the horror comes as a result of refusing to obey the word of Yahweh.

Finally in Isa 28:19, the refusal to hear is stated in 28:9,12. Isa 28:19 expresses the idea that it will cause terror when the significance of the message is fully realized.

Vermeylen deals with the word וְלֹעַ in a detailed note [1977: 397]. He states that this rare word in Isa 28:19 must be seen in the light of Jer 29:18, i.e. in relation to refusing to hear the word of Yahweh. Jer 29:16-20 is lacking in the LXX. It constitutes an addition to the letter of Jeremiah to the exiles. Its insertion has as its aim, according to Vermeylen, to compare the fall of Jerusalem in 586 with the second deportation. He concludes that the word is always found in Deuteronomic contexts: its use belongs to a precise literary context - that of the Deuteronomic explanation of the drama of the exile.

Finally, V19 picks up the vocabulary of v9 with the words בִּין and שְׁמוּעָה and offers an answer to the question posed there. Möller [272-74] draws attention to the effect of the hiphil in both verses, in particular how the word of Yahweh has been delivered between v9 by means of his dramatic punishment.

### Verse 20

Apart from the word קָצַר, the rest of the vocabulary is rare. The word קָצַר occurs in Isa 28:20; 50:2; 59:1 (1). In Num 11:23; Isa 50:2; 59:1, the rhetorical question is asked "Is the hand of the Lord shortened?" There are no texts which resemble the use of the word in Isa 28:20.

מִצֵּעַ is a hapax from the verb צָעַ.

שָׁרַע is found in the hithpael only in Isa 28:20. Elsewhere the root is

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1. Elsewhere in Num 11:23; 21:4; Judg 10:16; 16:16; Ps 89:46; 102:24; Prov 10:27; Ez 42:5; Mic 2:7; Zech 11:8.

found in Lev 21:18; 22:23.

מסכה occurs twice in the OT, in Isa 25:7 and 28:20.

כנס: The hithpael occurs only in Isa 28:20. It is used most frequently in Qoheleth (2:8; 2:26; 3:5). The root has the meaning "to gather" (1).

Halpern [117] sees v20 as referring to a tomb. The root צר is used to denote a corpse's litter in Job 17:13. The root is used again in connection with the underworld in Ps 139:8; Isa 14:11. Not even the underworld is strong enough to save Judah's rulers.

### Verse 21

הר: In Isaiah the mountain is generally identified as the mountain of Yahweh (2:2,3; 11:9; 25:6,7,10; 30:29; 57:13; 65:11; 66:20) or Mount Zion (4:5; 10:12,32; 8:18; 16:1; 18:7; 24:23; 27:13; 29:8; 31:4).

פרצים: In 2 Sam 5:20; 1 Chron 14:11, this is the place of David's defeat of the Philistines. The root פרץ occurs in Isaiah in 5:5; 28:21; 30:13; 35:9; 54:3; 58:12. It is בעל-פרצים which occurs in 2 Sam 5:20; 1 Chron.14:11. The etymology of the word is significant in these texts. It refers to Yahweh's "breaking" the enemy. In Isaiah 5:5 and 30:13 it refers to the breaking and destruction of Israel. In 54:3 and 58:12, it refers to the building up of the "broken down" cities. Although the defeat of the Philistines is probably referred to, in the context of ch 28 the meaning of the verb "break" may also be significant and evocative.

Evans [97] notes that the two references to Gibeon and Perazim

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1. 1 Chron 22:1; Neh 12:44; Esth 4:16; Ps 33:7; 147:2; Ez 22:21; 39:28.



make use of the traditions surrounding David. The tradition of Yahweh as a God who can create and destroy is seen here in that Yahweh can destroy the Davidic kingdom to establish something new. This idea, he argues [98] is also present in the words "marvellous" and "wonderful" in 29:14a.

עמק occurs in Isa 17:5; 22:7; 28:21; 65:10. Isa 17:5 speaks of the Valley of Rephaim and 65:10 of the Valley of Achor. As in 28:21, the phrase in 17:5 occurs as part of a simile.

גבעון occurs most frequently in Josh 10:1-11 where, by means of the power and might of Yahweh, it is defended against the threat of the Amorite kings.

רגז occurs in Isaiah in 5:25; 13:13; 14:3,9,16; 23:11; 28:21; 32:10,11. Often the word is found in contexts where the heavens and earth tremble before Yahweh. In prophetic literature the people tremble before the action of Yahweh (Jer 33:9; 50:34; Ez 16:43; Joel 2:10; Amos 8:8; Micah 7:17; Hab 3:2,7,16).

נָכַר: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 61:9 and 63:16. The word נִכְרִי occurs in 56:3,6; 60:10; 61:5; 62:8 and נִכְרִי in 2:6; 28:21. Nouns from the root נָכַר have the connotation of "foreign" or "foreigner": this is the obvious meaning in 28:21 where it stands parallel to זָר.

קום occurs in Isa 28:21; 29:3; 31:2; 33:10 in contexts where Yahweh rises up to fight. In ch 28, the irony is that while the treaty in which the people put their trust does not stand secure (קום), it is Yahweh, in whom the people do not trust, who will rise against them (קום).

Verse 22

מוסר occurs in Isaiah in 28:22 and 52:2 (1). It is often used metaphorically.

נלה occurs 14 times in First Isaiah: it is often Yahweh who is the agent of destruction (1:28; 10:18,22,23,25; 16:4; 21:16; 28:22; 29:20; 31:3) which often entails a failure in the harvest or in nature (15:6; 24:13; 27:10; 32:10).

חרץ: The niphal participle is found in Isa 10:22; 28:22 and in Dan 9:26,27; 11:36. As in Isa 28:22, so too in Daniel desolation and destruction are decreed in the same eschatological framework (2). In Isa 10:22, the same emphasis is achieved by the phrase כליון חרוץ שוטף as by the occurrence of the words משפט and צרקה in chs 28-33, namely that the punishment of Yahweh is just. In 28:27 the root חרץ occurs again but in a different context.

**CONTEXT**

' While v14-18\* may originally have been an oracle directed against the leaders of Jerusalem who sought refuge in Egypt (שואל and מות may be an indirect reference to Egypt and בחן may be an Egyptian loanword), the verses are now intended to be read within their wider framework. The unit is editorially linked to what precedes by לבן in v14a; the

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1. Elsewhere in Job 12:18; 39:5; Ps 2:3; 107:14; 116:16; Jer 2:20; 5:5; 27:2; 30:8; Nah 1:13.
  2. Elsewhere the root of this verb is found in Ex 11:7; Lev 22:22; Josh 10:21; 2 Sam 5:24; 1 Kgs 20:40; Job 14:5.

overwhelming scourge (שִׁט שׁוֹטֵף) in v15 is similar to the overwhelming waters (מִים שֹׁטְפִים) of v2. V19b refers back to v9b. V14-18 are also linked to the following verses: the root לוֹץ in v14 and v22 forms an *inclusio*. This *inclusio* is important since it is the "scoffers" who are directly addressed at the beginning and end of the unit, thus emphasizing that the judgment in between is directed at them. The word לץ is used of those who are the antithesis of the wise and righteous. The crimes of the wicked are described in ironic terms: they make a covenant with מוֹת and שָׁאוּל whereas they should have clung to the בְּרִית of Yahweh. The nouns כָּזָב and שֶׁקֶר, frequent in the Psalms and Proverbs, describe the activity and values of the unjust and deceitful. The verb חָסָה is normally used of seeking refuge in Yahweh: the exceptions are Isa 28:15,17 where the wicked seek refuge in lies and Isa 30:2,3 where the people seek refuge in Egypt. The words of Yahweh, הָאֱמִין לֹא יֵחִישׁ, on the other hand, refer to the just. "Those who believe" are opposed to the wicked in Ps 27:3; 116:10 [Vermeulen 1977: 394]. The tested stone against which everything is to be measured is the criterion of faith (the verb יָסַד can be used of founding something abstract, e.g. the testimonies of Yahweh in Ps 119:152). לֹא יֵחִישׁ expresses the same idea as the nouns מְנוּחָה, מְרוּגָה in v12. In v17, justice and righteousness are the fruit of belief: in 32:17, a similar idea is expressed. Both qualities are the antithesis of the lies and deceit of the wicked. V19b makes it clear that the sin of the wicked is their refusal to hear the word of Yahweh; the word זָעָה is always found in such a context [Vermeulen 1977: 397].

V21-22 have the function of reversing Yahweh's role at Mt Perazim: now he fights against the wicked until he utterly destroys them. Throughout the unit, as in v1-4, Yahweh channels the forces of nature against the wicked.

In sum, the present context of v14-22 reflects the struggle between the just and the wicked. The direct words of Yahweh in v16b-17 offer an alternative to those of the wicked as in v12 but his words go unheeded.

Isaiah 28: 23-29

## INTRODUCTION

Despite the obvious affinities of Isa 28:23-29 with wisdom literature, many commentators attribute the section to Isaiah, e.g. Duhm [179], Whedbee [51-67], Dietrich [126], Jensen [1973: 50], Wildberger [1086] (1). Some (Whedbee, Wildberger, Jensen) argue that it is not impossible that Isaiah made use of wisdom techniques. Barth [211] followed by Clements [1980a: 233] attribute the section to the AR editors of the book. Vermeylen [1977: 401] sees it as the reflection of the just opposed to the wicked in the late post-exilic era. Kaiser [1974: 233] interprets the passage as an example of apocalyptic eschatology.

Commentators note the carefully constructed form of the parable. V23 opens the parable: the theme of sowing is dealt with in v24-25 followed by a conclusion in v26. The theme of the harvest is dealt with in v27-28 followed by a conclusion in v29. Wildberger [1085-86] however, differentiates between v26, v29a, and v29b. While v26 and v29a suggest specifically that the farmer receives his wisdom from Yahweh, v29b offers a broader perspective, dealing with Yahweh's wisdom characteristics in general. He notes that the section has a wisdom and not a prophetic form. The *Lehreröffnungsformel* in v23 is typical of wisdom usage (Job 33:1,31; Ps 49:2; Prov 4:1; 7:24). The

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1. For a summary of positions adopted see Clements [1980a: 232-33].

didactic questions in v24a and v28a and the concluding *summary-appraisal* form in v29 are also typical of wisdom usage as well as the vocabulary - ירה, יסר and עצה, תושיה in v26 and 29 respectively.

As Kaiser argues [1974: 210], whether the parable existed in isolation before Isaiah used it (1) or whether it was composed and incorporated into the book of Isaiah at a later time is really an arbitrary question. The crucial question is the role the parable now plays within its present context: v26 and v29 are the key to such an understanding. Any meaning the parable may have had is now superseded by the meaning given to it in its present context. Kaiser [1974: 210] holds that it has an interpretative function between v22 and 29:1f. It presents the same alternation of judgment and salvation present throughout the rest of chs 28-33. Exum [1979: 145] suggests that the parable is important not only for the interpretation of ch 28 but also for an understanding of chs 28-32. Vermeylen [1977: 401] notes that the function of v29 is to interpret both 28:23-29 and 29:1-8. He draws attention to the same expression יהוה צבאות מעם in 28:29 and 29:6 and suggests that the phrase in v29 was taken from 29:6.

Many commentators, such as Kaiser [1974: 261], Barth [211], Vermeylen [1977: 399], Wildberger [1095] and Clements [1980a: 233], note that the lesson that there is a time for everything gives rise to hope and salvation. Yet this does not lead to a consensus in dating. Wildberger [1095] associates it with the period around 701 BC when Isaiah came to think that the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem would fail

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1. Wildberger [1091-92] and Watts [375] deal at some length with the myths of how the gods introduced agriculture to man in Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman literature.

and compares it to 14:24-27; 17:12-14; 29:5-8 where Isaiah introduces a note of hope. Barth [211] similarly sees it referring to the destruction of the Assyrians but at a later time - during the time of Josiah. Vermeylen [1977: 401] thinks that the hope of salvation springs from the oppressed post-exilic community of the just, a reassurance that Yahweh acts with wisdom towards Israel despite appearances.

The message of the parable, that everything has its proper time and place lends itself naturally to the interpretation that Yahweh has a time for punishing and a time for healing and restoring. The key to the function of the parable within its wider context is to be found in v26 and v29: more specifically in the way these verses continue the theme of instruction already introduced in v9,19 and anticipate its development through chs 29-33. The positive tone of the section provides a striking contrast to the first half of the chapter with its dire threats of destruction. A similar contrast is found in the development of chs 29, 30 and 31 which move from threats of destruction to promises of salvation.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 23

שִׁמְעוּ: The hiphil imperative used as part of the summons to listen occurs in Isa 1:2; 10:28; 32:9. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, it occurs as part of the summons in Hos 5:1; Joel 1:2: both begin with the formula שִׁמְעוּ-זאת. The summons appears most often in the Psalms where the

psalmist begins his prayer by asking Yahweh to hear him (1). It is found three times in the Book of Job, 33:1; 34:2; 37:14. Elsewhere it is found as an introduction to the speech of an important individual: Lamech in Gen 4:23; Balaam in Num 23:18; Moses in Deut 32:1; Deborah in Judg 5:3. Yahweh never uses the summons to listen: but the prophet often speaks for him, e.g. Joel 1:2.

In Isa 1:2,10, it is made very clear that the summons is to hear the word of Yahweh. It is more difficult to ascertain who the speaker is in 28:23 and 32:9: in the light of the use of the verb and the summons elsewhere, it would be surprising if it were Yahweh. Wildberger [1085] suggests that it is arbitrary to ask whether it is the prophet or Yahweh who speaks here since the words of both are synonymous and he cites Jer 4:19,22 as a classic example. Whedbee [59], on the other hand, does think it is an important question particularly in the context of Isa 28:23f. This, Whedbee suggests, is an example of disputational speech where the prophet is putting himself in the role of disputant in relation to the professional wisemen. Therefore, קוּלִי and אִמְרָתִי are very deliberate forms of speech in which the prophet explicitly states that what he is going to say is his own point of view.

קָשַׁב: The verb often appears along with שָׁמַע and in similar contexts. It forms part of the summons to listen in Isa 28:23; 34:1; 49:11; 51:4 (2). The Psalmist uses it in a plea to Yahweh to hear his prayer (3). The verb is often used in the negative to convey the refusal to hear and obey the word of Yahweh in Isa 48:18 (commandments of Yahweh) and

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1. Ps 5:2; 17:1; 39:13; 49:2; 54:4; 55:2; 78:1; 80:2; 84:9; 86:6; 140:7; 141:1; 143:1.
  2. Also in 2 Chron 20:15; Prov 4:1,20; 5:1; 7:24; Hos 5:1; Mic 1:2.
  3. Ps 5:3; 10:17; 17:1; 55:3; 61:2; 66:19; 130:2; 142:7.

elsewhere in 1 Sam 15:22; 2 Chron 33:10; Neh 9:34; Prov 1:24; Jer 6:10,17,19; 18:18; 23:18; Zech 1:4; 7:11. The verb occurs in First Isaiah in 10:30; 21:7; 28:23; 32:3; 34:1 but its use is most similar in 28:23 and 32:3.

קול: The noun occurs in the summons to listen in both Isa 28:2 and 32:9. Although the word occurs seven other times within chs 28-33 ( 29:4,6; 30:19,30,31; 31:4; 33:3) where a contrast is maintained throughout between the helpless voice of the people and the powerful voice of Yahweh, it is not part of the summons.

אמרה: The word occurs 4 times in Isaiah (5:24; 28:23; 29:4; 32:9) and nowhere else in prophetic literature. In the Psalms it occurs 25 times where, with the exception of Ps 17:6, it always denotes the word of Yahweh (1). In Deut 32:2 it is found parallel to לקח and in 33:9 to ברית. In some cases, it is simply a parallel to קול (Gen 4:23; Deut 32:2; Isa 28:23; 29:4; 32:9). In Gen 4:23; Deut 32:2; Isa 29:4, אמרה does not refer to Yahweh's word and probably not in 28:23 and 32:9 either. In 5:24, on the other hand, it does refer to Yahweh and is parallel to תורה. Wildberger [1090] makes much of the fact that אמרה and קול outside of Isaiah are only found parallel in Gen 4:23, in attempting to attribute the word אמרה and the contexts in which they occur to the prophet Isaiah. However he does admit that the word אמרה and especially the masculine form אִמְר occur often in Proverbs, Job, Psalms and is therefore part of the wisdom tradition. These data, however, could be used to support the contrary argument: the fact that אמרה only occurs in Isaiah in prophetic literature but often elsewhere could indicate that the word has been "imported" from non-Isaianic material.

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1. Ps 12:7; 18:31; 105:19; 119:11,38,41,50,58,67,76,82,103,116,123,133,140,148,154,158,162,170,172; 138:2; 147:15.



Jensen [1973: 69] states that the summons to listen which he calls the *Aufmerkruf* (after Wolff) is used in both prophetic and wisdom literature. In prophetic literature, it is often used as a simple call e.g. "Hear the word of the Lord" as in Amos 7:1, in which case it introduces an announcement. In Isa 1:2; Mic 6:2, the heavens and earth are called upon to witness. In wisdom literature, the *Aufmerkruf* often contains noun objects that designate instruction - in this case the *Aufmerkruf* becomes part of the *Lehreröffnungsformel*, the function of which is to call specifically with the view to instruct, e.g. Prov 1:8; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:20. The context can also show if the *Aufmerkruf* can be regarded as a *Lehreröffnungsformel*: in other words, a call to receive instruction is intended even when the terms used are ambivalent e.g. Prov 7:1,24; Isa 28:23. Jensen [70] notes that in Isa 28:23 and 32:9, the noun objects are identical and the verbs similar but concludes from the context that the former is a wisdom piece and the latter is an oracle of judgment. Jensen's conclusion is not convincing: the similarity of 28:2 and 32:9 and the absence of any other close parallels in prophetic literature would indicate that the two verses have a similar function. Secondly, the context of 32:9-14 (the contents of which are too vague and unspecified to be called an "oracle of judgment") between the wisdom preoccupations of v1-8 and v15-20 would suggest that its function is to instruct. Therefore, a sharp distinction cannot be drawn between the forms of 29:23 and 32:9 or their contexts. Boston [198-200] in discussing the formula in Deut 32:2, concludes that there is little difference between the prophetic use of the formula and the wisdom use, pointing out that there may have been more common ground between the prophet and sage than is generally assumed. Jensen [1973: 43] makes a further unhelpful distinction between *אמרה* as a wisdom

word and as a legal one: he notes that in Deut 32:2, it is parallel to the wisdom word **לֵקַח** and to the legal word **בְּרִית** in Deut 33:9 but concludes that although the word appears some 20 times in Ps 119, it is more a "wisdom" word than a "legal" one.

Finally, Kaiser [1974: 259] notes that the formula found in 28:23 is always addressed to some one specific when used by wisdom teachers (Job 33:1; 34:1; Ps 49:2; Prov 4:1; 7:24), ancient singers (Gen 4:24; Judg 5:3) or prophets (Isa 1:10; Hos 5:1). Isa 28:23 is the only exception where there is no specific audience named, an indication perhaps that the passage first came into existence in a written state.

#### Verse 24

**הַכֹּל-הַיּוֹם**: The phrase introduced by interrogative participle appears nowhere else in the OT. The phrase **כָּל-הַיּוֹם** appears just once in First Isaiah but each time in Second Isaiah where **הַיּוֹם** occurs, it is always preceded by **כָּל** (51:13; 52:5; 62:6; 65:2,5). In prophetic literature the phrase appears elsewhere only in Jer 20:7,8 and Hos 12:2; but the phrase is found approximately 25 times in the Psalms, twice in Proverbs and twice in Lamentations. The phrase normally means "continually". It denotes how slowly time passes particularly when one is under oppression (Ps 38:7,13; Jer 20:7). In Isa 28:24, the phrase is given an emphatic position at the beginning of the verse.

**חָרַשׁ**: The verb is attested in Isaiah with three different meanings:

- (a) "to fabricate or manufacture". The verb with this meaning occurs only in Second Isaiah (40:19,20; 41:7; 44:11,12,13; 45:16; 54:16). In 3:3 the word **חָרָשִׁים** comes from this root.
- (b) "to plough". The verb with this meaning is found in Isaiah only in 28:24. It is widely attested elsewhere (Deut 22:10;

Judg 14:18; 1 Kgs 19:19; Job 1:14; 4:8; Ps 129:3; Prov 20:4; Jer 26:18; Hos 10:11,13; Amos 6:12; 9:13; Mic 3:12). Although the verb meaning "to plough" can<sup>be</sup> used in a literal sense (Deut 22:10; 1 Sam 8:12; 1 Kgs 19:19; Job 1:14; Prov 20:4), it very often occurs in a metaphorical sense and in such instances has negative overtones (the exception is Amos 9:13 where the verb occurs in the context of fruitful prosperity, the sign of God's blessing in the latter days). In Ps 129:3, the ploughers are the wicked who oppress the righteous. In Prov 20:4, the lazy man does not plough and so has no harvest. Job 4:8 concerns those who plough and sow iniquity. In Hos 10:11-13, Judah and Jacob have ploughed iniquity and reaped injustice - now they must plough, sow righteousness and reap steadfast love. In Amos 6:12, the verb occurs as part of an image expressing a change in fortunes: just as one shouldn't plough the sea, so too justice and righteousness shouldn't be turned into poison and woodworm. In Mic 3:12 (= Jer 26:18), Zion will be ploughed like a field - this is God's punishment. It is in a negative context concerning the riddle of Samson in Judg 14:18, where the verb appears.

Isa 28:24, on the other hand, is very positive. In the image of the farmer, it represents a very correct activity ... an activity that is taught by Yahweh himself.

- (c) "to be silent or deaf". The verb with this meaning is found particularly in Second Isaiah or in texts in First Isaiah which have come under the influence of Second Isaiah (29:28; 35:5; 36:21; 41:1; 42:14,18,19; 43:8). In ch 28, it is interesting that the root שָׁחַ should appear in v24, after the summons to hear and pay attention in v23. It is unlikely from the context that such an association of ideas, (hear, pay attention, deaf) was intended: however, taken together with פָּתַח, often used of opening the ear (see below), a pun may be perceived - just as the farmer prepares and opens the ground, so too the spiritually deaf are urged to open their ears to hear and pay attention to the word of Yahweh. The word לִזְרַע may be an addition to avoid any ambiguity as to the meaning of the verb שָׁחַ in this verse and to clarify its meaning as "plough" in the context.

זרע: The noun occurs in First Isaiah in 1:4; 5:10; 6:13; 14:20; 17:11; 23:3; 30:23 and 15 times in Second Isaiah (1). With the exception of 55:10, זרע always means "offspring" in Second Isaiah as it does in 1:4; 14:20. As a verb זרע occurs in First Isaiah in 17:10; 28:24; 30:23; 32:20; 37:30. The sowing in 28:24 serves as an example of how Yahweh teaches according to משפט.

One might detect a similarity between 28:24f and 30:18ff. Firstly in vocabulary: in 28:26 his God teaches the sower according to משפט while in 30:18 Yahweh is described as אלהי-משפט: the verb זרע occurs in 28:26 and the noun זרע in 30:20: the verb ירה in 28:24 and in 30:23. Secondly just as 28:26 interprets v23-25 in the light of Yahweh as teacher (ירה), so too 30:18b interprets v19f in the light of the teaching role of Yahweh (מוריר in v20). Sowing and harvesting in 30:23 are conditional upon attitudes described in v20-22: in other words the fertility described in v23f presupposes that the people walk in the way the teacher shows them and that they abandon their graven images. V23 acts as a promised reward for walking in the way of Yahweh's law. The farmer in 28:23f who sows according to the instruction and plan of Yahweh similarly profits from his work.

פתח: The qal occurs in Isaiah in 5:27; 14:17; 22:22; 24:18; 26:2; 35:5; 41:18; 45:1,8; 50:5; 51:14; 53:7. In 35:5, the phrase ואזני-חרשים occurs: the verbs פתח, חרש are found together as in 28:24 but have different meanings in the two contexts. In 50:5, the verb is also used of opening the ear in the sense of being obedient. It is used in Second Isaiah to denote the "opening up" of the earth: in 45:5 the earth

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1. Isa 41:8; 43:5; 44:3; 45:25; 48:19; 53:10; 54:3; 55:10; 57:3,4; 59:21; 61:9,11; 65:9,23.

opens so that salvation may come forth and in 41:18 rivers are opened up in the desert.

The piel occurs in Isa 20:2; 28:24; 45:1; 48:8; 58:6; 60:11. (1). Generally it is used of loosening or freeing from bonds. It is never used of opening up or harrowing the soil as it is in Isa 28:24. In Isa 48:8, it is used of opening the ear.

שָׂרַר: The verb occurs in Job 39:10; Isa 28:24; Hos 10:11. In Hos 10:11 and Isa 28:24 the verbs הָרַשׁ, שָׂרַר are parallel. It is always used of cultivating.

### Verse 25

שָׁנָה meaning "to be similar", often found in the piel "to place", occurs frequently in the Psalms (2). In Isaiah, the verb occurs in 28:25; 38:13; 40:25; 46:5. No other context is similar to Isa 28:25. The verb is used nowhere else to denote the levelling of soil before sowing. The only other agriculture image is in Hos 10:1 where Israel is a luxuriant vine yielding its fruit.

פָּוַן: The verb is used often in the OT meaning "to scatter". In Isaiah, it is found in the hiphil in 28:25,27 and 41:16. In both instances, the context is an agricultural one.

The word קָצַח in 28:25,27 is a hapax as is כִּמְךָ.

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1. Elsewhere in Gen 24:32; Ex 28:9,11,36; 2 Chron 2:6,13; Job 12:18; 30:11; 38:31; 39:5; 41:6; Ps 30:12; 102:21; 105:20; 116:16; Zech 24:32.
  2. Ps 16:8; 18:34; 21:6; 27:15; 89:20; 119:30; 131:2. Elsewhere it is found in Esth 3:8; 5:13; 7:4; Job 33:27; Prov 3:15; 8:11; 26:4; Lam 2:13 and Hos 10:1.

זרק: The verb is used predominantly in the Pentateuch, 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles (1). Where it occurs in these books, it is always used in the context of the cult, denoting the sprinkling of blood or water. Outside of this, it is found only in Isa 28:25; Ez 10:2; 36:25; 43:18; Hos 7:9. Even in Ezekiel, the contexts are similar to those where it is found in the Pentateuch. The verb is used in Hos 7:9 to denote a "scattering of grey hairs". So the word is never used in the OT, outside of 28:25, to denote the scattering of seed. It represents a unique use of this verb.

חטה, which means "wheat" [Healey: 115], occurs in the singular in Ex 9:32; Deut 8:8; 32:14; Job 31:40; Ps 81:17; Isa 28:25; Joel 1:11. In Deut 8:8; 32:14; Ps 81:17, it occurs as part of a list of blessings which Yahweh will bestow upon his people. Where the noun occurs in the plural, in the majority of cases it is found in the Pentateuch or the historical books.

שורה is a hapax in the OT. The nearest word משורה, which denotes a measure, is found in Lev 19:35; 1 Chron 23:29; Ez 4:11,16.

שערה, which means "barley" [Healey: 115], occurs in the singular in Ex 9:31; Deut 8:8; Job 31:40; Isa 28:25; Joel 1:11. In these texts, it is always found with חטה.

נסמן is a hapax in the OT.

בסמת, which means "emmer" [Healey: 115], occurs in the singular in Ex

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1. Ex 9:8,10; 24:6,8; 29:16,20; Lev 1,5,11; 3:2,8,13; 7:14; 8:19,24; 9:12,18; 17:6; Num 18:17; 19:13,20; 2 Kgs 16:13,15; 2 Chron 29:22; 30:16; 34:4; 35:11.

9:32; Isa 28:25 and in the plural in Ez 4:9.

Three of the above words appear together only in Isa 28:25 and in a gloss in Ex 9:31-32. These words are חטה, שעררה, כסמת. Commentators on Ex 9:31-32 regard it as an insignificant gloss, e.g. Hyatt [120]; Childs [1974: 159] sees it as a midrashic note which distinguishes between two sets of crops; he sees the gloss as coming from a late period - an observation that may perhaps apply also to the dating of 28:23-29.

גבול occurs in Isaiah in 15:8; 19:19; 54:12; 60:18. It is very common elsewhere in the OT meaning "border", "limit", "territory". The noun גבולה occurs in the singular only in Isa 28:25 and in the plural in 10:13 (1). In Isa 10:13, the King of Assyria claims that it is by his wisdom and understanding that he can remove the boundaries of peoples. The noun is not used elsewhere in an agriculture context.

### Verse 26

יסר: The basic meaning of the verb is "to correct, to chastise". It occurs predominantly in Wisdom literature: in Proverbs (2) in Job (3) and in the Psalms (4). In the Pentateuch, its use is confined to Leviticus (5) and Deuteronomy (6). In prophetic literature, it occurs with great

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1. Elsewhere in the plural in Num 34:2,12; Josh 18:20; 19:49; Job 24:2; Ps 74:17.
  2. The verb in 9:7; 19:18; 29:17,19; 31:1: the noun מוסר in 1:2,3,7,8; 3:11; 4:1,13; 5:12,23; 6:23; 7:22; 8:10,33; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1,18,24; 15:5,10,32,33; 16:22.
  3. The verb in 4:3; 40:2 and the noun in 5:17; 12:18; 20:3; 36:10.
  4. The verb in 2:10; 6:2; 16:7; 38:2; 39:12; 94:10,12; 118:18; and the noun in 50:17.
  5. Lev 26:18,23,28.
  6. The verb in 4:36; 8:5; 21:18; 22:18 and the noun in 11:2.

regularity in Jeremiah (1) but is quite rare in Isaiah where the verb occurs in 8:11; 28:26 and the noun in 26:16; 53:5. It occurs rarely in other prophetic books (2).

In Job and Proverbs the verb is used to denote correction and chastisement in a wisdom context. This is human rather than divine correction. On the other hand, in the Psalms (6:2; 16:7; 38:2; 39:12; 118:18) Yahweh is nearly always the subject of the verb. This is true also of Leviticus (26:18,23,28), Deuteronomy (4:36; 8:5), Hosea (5:2; 7:12; 10:10) but particularly Jeremiah (2:19,30; 5:3; 7:28; 10:24; 17:23; 30:11,14; 31:18; 32:33; 35:13). In Isaiah Yahweh is the subject or at least associated with the action in 8:11; 26:16; 28:26 and 53:5.

It is noticeable that the verb is closely associated with hearing or refusing to hear the word of Yahweh in Leviticus (26:18,23,28), Deuteronomy (4:36) and in the prose sections of Jeremiah (7:28; 17:23; 32:33; 35:13). This may also be the case in Isa 28:26 where there is an emphasis throughout the chapter on refusing to hear his word.

Deut 8:5 and 21:18 may be compared to Isa 28:26. Firstly, Deut 8:5 because it seems to reflect the coming together of two traditions - the idea of the father correcting his son (the human sphere) with the idea of Yahweh chastising his people (the divine sphere).

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1. The verb in 2:19; 6:8; 10:24; 30:11; 31:18 and the noun in 2:30; 5:3; 7:28; 10:8; 17:23; 30:14; 32:33; 35:13.
  2. In Ezekiel the verb occurs in 23:48 and the noun in 5:15; in Hosea the verb occurs in 7:12; 10:10; and the noun in 5:2 and in Zephaniah the noun occurs in 3:2,7.



Secondly, Deut 21:18-21 is interesting because many words are found there which occur in Isa 28-33:

Isa 28:12:	לא שמע
Isa 28:23:	שמע בקול
Isa 28:25:	יסר
Isa 30:1:	בן-סורר

Although Deut 21:18-21 concerns a son's obedience towards his father and mother, it acts as a paradigm for Yahweh's relationship with his people in Isa 28-33.

In some cases the chastisement of Yahweh involves barrenness in the land and even a lack of basic food (Lev 26:18; Deut 4:36; 8:5). This is an antithesis to the fruitfulness of the land which is a reward for obeying the word of Yahweh, an idea found throughout Deuteronomy, e.g. 7:13; 8:1 and an idea that may be present in 30:19f where walking in the way of Yahweh ensures fertility in the land.

In Isaiah, the root יסר occurs in 8:11; 26:16; 28:26; 53:5. In 28:26, it is parallel to ירה and so is unlikely to mean "chastise" in the context. It must mean "instruct" or "guide". The function of v26 is to contrast the success of the farmer who is taught by Yahweh with the destruction of the people who refuse to hear his words. The verb is used, as it often is in Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, in the context of hearing or refusing to hear the word of Yahweh.

The recurring presence of צרקה and משפט within chs 28-33 has already been observed. Vermeylen [1977: 400] compares למשפט to a similar expression in Jer 10:24 and 30:11 which have verbal and theological similarities with Second Isaiah. In Jer 10:24; 30:11,

למשפט occurs in a context which stresses that the punishment of Yahweh is just and only temporary while the nations will be destroyed. Wildberger [1093] citing Gen 40:13 and Jer 8:7, translates למשפט as "in good order", an interpretation in keeping with its immediate context of the agricultural cycle.

### Verse 27

Healey [117] notes that v27 is agriculturally correct and the author may be quoting a well-known saying here.

חרון: The noun, meaning "threshing-sledge", appears in prophetic literature in Isa 28:27; 41:15 and Amos 1:3; elsewhere it is found in Job 41:22 and Dan 9:25.

וש: Isaiah is the only book where the word occurs more than once (21:10; 25:10; 28:27,28; 41:15) (1). The verb occurs with חרון in Isa 28:27; 41:15; Amos 1:3. In the latter instance, threshing is used figuratively to describe oppression.

אין: The use of this noun is quite restricted in the OT. It is used most frequently in Ezekiel chs 1 and 10 in the prophet's vision of the wheels (2) and in 1 Kgs 7 in a description of the stands of Solomon's temple (7:30,32,33). It is used in Ex 14:25 where the chariot wheels of the Egyptians clog up at the Red Sea. In Nah 3:2, the rumble of the wheels denotes the coming of the enemy. Isa 28:27 and Prov 20:26 are the only two texts where the wheel occurs in an agricultural image

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1. Elsewhere in Deut 25:4; Judg 8:7; 2 Kgs 13:7; 1 Chron 21:20; Job 39:15; Jer 50:11; Hos 10:11; Mic 4:13; Hab 3:12.
  2. Ez 1:15,16,19,20,21; 10:9,10,12,13,16,19. It is also found in Ez 3:13 and 11:22.

denoting an action taking place in the harvest.

עגלה: The noun is generally restricted to the Pentateuch (1) and historical books (2). It is used to denote the cart upon which the Ark was carried in Numbers 7, 1 Samuel 6. Elsewhere it is found in Ps 46:10; Isa 5:18; 28:27,28. In Isa 5:18, it occurs in the phrase "cart wheel" and is used figuratively.

מטה: The noun occurs in Isa 9:3; 10:5,15,24,26; 14:5; 28:27; 30:32. It is always used figuratively except in 28:27. It is used of the external enemy in 9:3; 14:5 but of Assyria in particular in 10:5,15,24 and of Yahweh who reverses the role of Assyria in 10:26; 30:32.

שבט: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 9:3; 10:5,15,24; 11:4; 14:5,29; 28:27; 30:31. It is parallel to מטה in 9:3; 10:5,15,24; 14:5; 30:31-32. With the exception of 28:17, it is always used figuratively in Isaiah: it describes the oppressor or the instrument of the oppressor (9:3; 10:5,15,24; 14:5,29). Sometimes Yahweh is the oppressor as in 30:31-32 or the royal figure in 11:4. Only in 28:27 in Isaiah is the noun used in a literal sense. The fact that both words are associated closely with Assyria in ch 10 might suggest that an indirect reference to Assyria is intended by the presence of the words in 28:27: the application is clear - just as the farmer only beats dill and cumin for a specific time כִּי לֹא לְנֶצַח, so too Yahweh's punishment by means of Assyria is only temporary.

The verb חבט is used in Deut 24:20; Judg 6:11; Ruth 2:17; Isa 27:12; 28:27. It is used for the beating of wheat or olive trees at harvest time. In Isa 27:12 the subject of the verb is Yahweh and is used as part of the threshing image.

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1. Gen 45:19, 21,27; 46:5; Num 7:3,6,7,8

2. 1 Sam 6:7; 8:10,11,14; 2 Sam 6:3; 1 Chron 13:7.

Verse 28

לחם: The noun occurs often in Isaiah (1). Interesting are the following texts: 30:23; 33:16; 55:10. In all three instances, the bread or grain comes as gift from Yahweh – which is also the meaning behind 28:27-29. In 55:11, as in 28:29, the image of the seed growing and producing grain for food illustrates how the words that go forth from Yahweh are successful and effective.

רקק: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 28:28 and 41:15 (2). It means "to grind" but sometimes it has the idea of utterly destroying someone, of grinding them into the dust as in 2 Sam 22:43; 2 Kgs 23:6,15; 2 Chron 34:4,7. (For the adjective רק which occurs twice in Isaiah, see 29:5.) Apart from Is 28:28, the only other occurrence of the verb רקק is in Mic 4:13. There are some similarities between Isa 28:23-29 and Mic 4:11-13 in both vocabulary and theme.

In vocabulary, similar expressions are found:

רוש	Isa 28:28	Mic 4:13
רקק	Isa 28:28	Mic 4:13
עצה	Isa 28:29	Mic 4:12
אדון כל-הארץ	Isa 28:22	Mic 4:13
לא ידעו	Isa 28:9,19	Mic 4:12
לא הבינו	Isa 28:9,19	Mic 4:12

The same themes are present: the defence of Zion by Yahweh against

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1. Isa 3:1,7; 4:1; 21:14; 28:28; 30:20,23; 33:16; 36:17; 44:15,19; 51:14; 55:2,10; 65:25
  2. Elsewhere the verb occurs in Ex 30:36; 32:20; Dt.9:21; 2 Sam 22:43; 2 Kgs 23:6,15; 2 Chron 15:16; 34:4,7; Mic 4:13.

foreign enemies (Isa 29:1-8; Mic 4:11); the theme of understanding the plan of Yahweh (Isa 28:7,19,26,29; Mic 4:12); imagery taken from nature and the harvest (Isa 28:23-28; Mic 4:12b-13). Vermeylen [1977: 399-400] notes that the ambiguity of the two verbs in v28, יְרוּשָׁנוּ and יִקְרְנוּ (they can be either third masculine singular or first plural) facilitated the actualization of the parable for later generations.

לֹא לְנֶצַח: The phrase occurs in Isaiah in 13:20; 25:8; 28:28; 33:20; 34:10; 57:16. The phrase occurs in a Day of Yahweh context in 34:10, a verse which resembles 28:19 in vocabulary: yet in 28:19 it is the leaders of Jerusalem who are being warned while in 34:10 it is Edom. Every context in which the phrase occurs offers good news to Israel: in 13:20, Babylon will never be inhabited again; in 25:8, Yahweh will swallow up death forever; in 33:20, the habitation of Jerusalem will never be removed; in 34:10, Zion's enemies will suffer eternal punishment. If a reference to Assyria is seen in v27-28, then the phrase in v28 offers the good news that the punishment of Yahweh is only temporary. The temporary nature of the event, כִּי לֹא לְנֶצַח is to be connected to the rhetorical question at the start of v24, הֲבֵל הַיּוֹם. Both phrases emphasize that the action Yahweh is taking will not last forever and modify the expressions בְּיוֹם בַּלִּילָה, בְּבֹקֶר בְּבֹקֶר which underlined the permanency of the punishment.

הָמָּה: The verb occurs in prophetic literature only in Isa 28:28; Jer 51:34

(1). In all instances the verb has a metaphorical meaning. Only in Ex 14:24 and Isa 28:28 does it refer to the action of crushing by a cart wheel. The noun is found in prophetic literature in Isa 5:28; 17:13; 28:28; Jer 47:3; Ez 10:2,6,13; 23:24; 26:10 (2). It is found in Ezekiel's vision in 10:2,6,13. The sound of the wheels signifies the approach of the enemy in Isa 5:28; Jer 47:3; Ez 23:24; 26:10. The word occurs in no other context which is similar to Isa 28:28.

פָּרַשׁ: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 21:7,9; 22:6,7; 28:28; 31:1; 36:9. It generally occurs in the context of war: the agricultural context of 28:28 is the exception. Within the context of chs 28-33, the image of the farmer with his horses and cart contrasts with 31:1-2, with those who rely on horses and chariots rather than on Yahweh. Both contexts express the idea that Yahweh is wise (28:29 and 31:2). Wildberger [1084] discusses the position of the noun פָּרַשׁ in v28. He suggests that it causes problems for two reasons: firstly because it comes after עֲגֻלָּתוֹ where one would expect it to come before. Secondly only here in the OT, does one hear of threshing horses. He notes [1084] that Duhm [181] and Kaiser [1974: 258] emend the text to וּפָרְשָׁיו וְלֹא but does not agree with this because it destroys the parallelism. He concludes that the general meaning is clear - that no farmer is so inept as to allow his horses to rip up the corn.

### Verse 29

גָּרַל: The hiphil of the verb occurs in Isaiah in 10:15; 28:29; 42:21. Elsewhere in the OT, it has a positive significance when Yahweh is the

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1. Elsewhere in Ex 14:24; 23:27; Deut 2:15; Josh 10:10; Judg 4:15; 1 Sam 7:10; 2 Sam 22:15; 2 Chron 15:6; Esth 9:24; Ps 18:15; 144:6.
  2. Elsewhere in Ps 77:19; 83:14; Qoh 12:6.

subject (1) but negative when man tries to magnify himself against Yahweh or when the verb refers to the enemy (2). In Joel 2:20,21 the verb is used twice with each of these two nuances. In Isa 9:3; 28:29; 42:21; the hiphil is associated with Yahweh and expresses his might. The hiphil is associated with wisdom in Qoh 1:16; 2:4 and Isa 28:29.

תושיה: The noun occurs in prophetic literature only in Isa 28:29 and Mic 6:9. Elsewhere it always occurs in wisdom contexts (3). BDB [444] translates it as "wisdom". It is parallel to עצה only in Isa 28:29 and Prov 8:14 (4) but is associated with the verb יעץ in Job 26:3. In Prov 8:14, insight and counsel belong to wisdom but in Isa 28:29 they belong to Yahweh. Many commentators, e.g. Wildberger [1085], note the difficulty in translating the word and suggest that it depends on the context. In this case it is parallel to עצה and its meaning should be determined accordingly.

עצה: Within chs 28-33 the noun עצה occurs in 28:29; 29:15; 30:1. The plan of Yahweh in 28:29 contrasts with the plan which is hidden from Yahweh in 29:15. The frustration of those who hide their plan in 29:15f or who carry out their own plan in 30:1 contrasts with the success of the farmer in 28:23f who follows the plan of Yahweh.

יָצַח: The verb occurs in other contexts, particularly in Second Isaiah,

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1. 1 Sam 12:24; Ps 18:51; 126:2,3; 138:2; Joel 2:21.
  2. Ps 35:26; 38:17; 41:10; 55:13; Jer 48:26,42; Lam 1:9; Dan 8:8,11; Joel 2:20,21.
  3. Job 5:12; 6:13; 11:6; 12:16; 26:3; 30:22; Prov 2:7; 3:21; 8:14; 18:1.
  4. See Isa 32:1 which may have close links with Prov 8:15 in that both verses emphasize the role of justice and righteousness in the rule of the just king.

which emphasize the importance of the word "coming out" of the mouth Yahweh. These texts are 2:3b; 28:29; 45:23; 48:3; 51:4,5; 55:11. In 2:3b, the Law of Yahweh "comes forth" from Zion and Jerusalem (1). In 45:23, righteousness goes forth from the mouth of Yahweh - a word that shall not return. In 48:3, the former things that came forth from Yahweh's mouth quickly come to pass. In 51:4, the law and righteousness goes forth from Yahweh. In 55:11 the word that goes forth from the mouth of Yahweh is always effective and fruitful.

Childs [1967: 128-136] puts forward the case that 14:24-27; 17:12-14; 28:29 are similar in that they all offer a summary and an appraisal of what has been said in the preceding verses. He calls this the *summary-appraisal* form. It is didactic in tone and is characterized by a demonstrative pronoun הַזֶּה or הַזֵּאת which establishes the reference.

Within ch 28, the function of v29 is to continue to interpret the actions of Yahweh: it adds to the characteristics of Yahweh already mentioned in v6 and interprets the harsh action of Yahweh in v22 where a decree of destruction comes from him (מַעַם יְהוָה). Now in v29, תוֹשִׁיָּה and עֲצָה also come from him (מַעַם יְהוָה). This tempers and interprets both the decree of destruction of v22 and the oracle against Ariel in 29:1f.

## CONTEXT

Contrary to the opinion of several commentators, the unit v23-29 does not seem incongruous within its present context. It develops themes introduced in ch 28: listening to the word of Yahweh, the role of Yahweh as teacher and his ability to channel the potential of nature as a

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1. Isa 2:3b and 28:9 are two of the very few occasions where the verb יָרָא occurs in First Isaiah.



blessing or a curse. The summons to listen in v23 is not addressed to a specific audience: it is particularly striking and urgent coming after the statement of utter destruction in v22 which was the result of refusing to listen. The appeal to listen is now extended to everyone.

The section deals with the sowing of the seed (v24-25) and the subsequent harvest (v27-28). The emphasis on the passing of time (הכל in v24 and לא לנצח in v28) softens the harsh phrase בבקר בבקר in v19 which suggests that Yahweh's punishment will be forever. The words מטה and שבט in v27 may refer to an oppression that is coming to an end. The main point in v23-29, however, is how the blessing of sowing and of a fruitful harvest reflects Yahweh's wisdom which he passes on to man. His blessings in nature are tangible proof of his wisdom and consequently qualify and confirm him in his role as teacher.

Comparison has already been made with 30:18f which is similar in theme and vocabulary to the present section; when the people walk in the way of Yahweh, blessings in the form of fruitfulness in nature ensue. Such a view occurs in the Book of Deuteronomy where obeying the word of Yahweh ensures material prosperity.

The three words חטה, שערה, כסמה occur only in Isa 28:25 and in a gloss in Ex 9:31-32. This may support the view of Kaiser [1974: 233] and Vermeylen [1977: 401] that the passage is post-exilic, the function of which was to reassure the oppressed community of the just that Yahweh acts with wisdom. The section, then, continues the theme of the struggle between the just and the evil. Those who listen and are taught by Yahweh receive blessings through the produce of nature. The wicked, on the other hand, are destroyed (v22).

## Chapter 3

### ISAIAH 29

### Chapter 3

### ISAIAH 29

#### Isaiah 29: 1-8

#### INTRODUCTION

Isa 29:1-8, a section "which simply bristles with problems" [Childs 1967: 54], is regarded as a composite unit. Duhm [182] and Marti [212] considered only v1-4 as genuinely Isaian because these verses contain words of judgment: v5-8 had to be an addition because they contain a promise of deliverance. Fohrer [1967a: 75] considered v1-7 as authentic to Isaiah. The promise of deliverance in v5-7 is conditional, affirming what would happen if Jerusalem repented and trusted in Yahweh. He understands v4 as expressing the situation of humbled penitence which will be forced upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Therefore a proper understanding of v4 makes the assumption that v5-8 is a later addition unnecessary.

Childs [1967: 57] regards v8 as an addition and sees two levels in v1-7; v1-4, 5c-6 come from Isaiah and are an invective-threat directed against Jerusalem. A secondary level, v5a,5b,7, transformed the oracle into a promise by adding a word of threat to the nations which was drawn from the language of the older Zion tradition.

Wildberger [1102-03] and Barth [185-8] treat v1-7 as a unit going back to Isaiah. They see a development within the passage, with the first section ending after v5abα. Both base their observation that v5abα belongs to v1-4 on their interpretation of זרִיך. They emend this word to זרִיך. Wildberger [1099] translates it as "your insolent ones" referring to a group within Jerusalem and Barth [186] also stresses that the word refers to a group who are the enemy of God within Jerusalem.

Wildberger's defence that v1-7 comes from Isaiah is drawn from his overall view of what he perceives the message of the prophet to be. In the teaching of Isaiah, there is a basic ambivalence: Yahweh will destroy and protect at the same time. This aspect of Isaiah's teaching can be found in the totality of his message, e.g. there is an ambivalence in the motif of the remnant and in the name of Isaiah's son. The ambivalence is also present in the role of Assyria as instrument of God and then in its subsequent destruction by God. He also suggests that when Jerusalem was besieged in 701, Isaiah turned his message around to affirm the overthrow of the Assyrian attackers in 14:24-27 and dates 29:1-7 to a time not long before 701 but much later than 28:23-29. The city must be humiliated and brought low and Assyria is the instrument; but at the same time Yahweh's guarantee as to the stability of Zion still stands.

Barth [189] agrees with Wildberger and notes that oracles of judgment and salvation often form one complex in Isaiah and gives as examples 1:21-26; 10:33a+11:1-5; 28:14-18; 31:1-4+8a. He does not date the section specifically but assigns it to a "late" period in the teaching of Isaiah.

Clements [1980a: 234] sees v1-4 as a core which has come from Isaiah; v5-7 come from the Josianic period and v8 comes from a still

later period (1) V1-4 is a clear condemnation of Hezekiah's plan to rebel against Assyria - it is a warning given by Isaiah concerning an attack by an alien army upon Jerusalem in the period 705-701. The Josianic redactors composed v5-8 out of the traditional imagery of a divine theophany in a storm. The aim of the redaction was to show that the failure of Sennacherib to take Jerusalem in 701 was a victory for Yahweh. This is a very important text for Clements because he feels that out of the interpretation of the events of 701 there grew up in the Josianic period a belief that Zion was inviolable not only against the Assyrians but also against all nations. V7 gave rise to a central feature of what has become known as the "Zion Tradition". The Zion Tradition must therefore be understood as a particular adaptation of the interpretation placed upon what happened in 701.

Vermeylen [1977: 401] limits the Isaian oracle to v1-4 because in his opinion the pre-exilic woe oracle is always negative. Even within v1-4, v4b is an addition; it repeats v4a word for word and borrows its construction from v5a. The glossator of v4b read in v4a a reference to the mediums - a concern of the Deuteronomic theologians in 1 Sam 28:3-25. With regard to v5-7, Vermeylen states that all the Isaian discourses relative to the Assyrian offensive against Zion have been reworked in the same way by Deuteronomic editors (2).

V8 is generally seen as an addition. Wildberger [1102] notes that v8 is written in prose, an indication of a secondary addition. It is an

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1. Elsewhere [1980b: 83] he states that v5-6 was added in the Josianic period and that v7-8 was also added in the Josianic period but at a later stage.
  2. Isa 5:30; 8:8b-10:15; 10:27b-34; 14:26; 17:12-14; 28:21; 31:5; 33:3-4.

unnecessary variation on v7 - a "schoolmasterly" clarification added by a compiler. Barth [186] attributes v8 to the AR. Vermeylen [1977: 401] argues that v8 which anticipates the theme of drunkenness in v9 must be attributed to a group of pious Jews in the post-exilic period; after the return from exile, the nations were identified as evil Jews, the descendants of a mixed population.

Kaiser [1974: 265] sees in v1-8 three stanzas of 10 lines each, v1-3, 4-6, 7-8. There is a distinctive movement within it from threat to deliverance; the nations which destroy are in turn destroyed. He notes however the composite nature of the unit; in particular the fact that וְהָיָה, a favourite opening phrase of redactors, occurs 7 times in v2b $\alpha$ , 2b $\beta$ , 4b, 5a, 5b $\beta$ , 7 $\alpha$ , 8a $\alpha$ . He can only attribute v1, 2a $\alpha$ , and 3 to Isaiah and even in this, the prophecy contains no proper reproach. In his view, 29:1-8 has been pieced together; it has an unhistorical conception of deliverance - similar to 30:27f; 31:4f. Its presence here is strongly influenced by 28:14f. The sense of mystery is apocalyptic in tone. In particular, the dramatic intervention of Yahweh is an apocalyptic motif.

Faced with such divergent scholarly opinion, how is one to treat 29:1-8? While recognizing the composite nature of these verses, one is inclined towards the approach of Fohrer, Wildberger and Barth who maintain the unity of v1-7 and treat v8 as an addition. Whether or not all of these verses can be attributed to Isaiah (and this seems unlikely), the close intricate construction of v1-7 demands that it be treated as a unit; otherwise the effect of the build-up of similes and association of images are lost.

In this regard the article of Exum [1981] is illuminating. Exum, while side-stepping many of the problems raised by Wildberger, Barth

and Vermeylen, looks at v1-8 from a literary point of view, within the perspective of the present woe complex 29:1-14. Firstly, she draws out [350-52] the literary significance of v1-8 and secondly discusses the effect of its juxtaposition with v9-14.

Within v1-8, Exum [342-46] notes the richness of the poem e.g. repetition of the same words in v1a, 1c, 2b, 5c, 9a, 9b, 14b, 14c, 14d; alliteration and assonance in v3bc, 5c, 6a, 6bc, 7cd. Like Kaiser, she divides the poem into three sections v1-3, 4-6, 7-8. The poem moves from image to image through association e.g. v4 portrays Ariel as speaking from the dust while v5 compares the multitude of foreigners to fine dust. V7-8 clarifies the role of the *המון* which is ambiguous in v4-6. Exum believes that the purpose of v4-6 in particular the words *תפקר, המון*, is intentionally ambiguous; a suspense is created which is not resolved until v7-8. A development can be traced through the poem from simile to simile and from image to image. V8 which speaks of Yaweh's protection for Zion is exactly the opposite of v1 which speaks of Yahweh's attack on Ariel so that the poem moves from Ariel to Zion.

Exum's emphasis [1981: 350-52] on looking at v1-8 in the light of the woe complex 29:1-14 is also useful. She suggests a possible *inclusio* in v1 and 14 in that the first and last verses concern the cult. The second section (v9-14) now influences one's reading of the first section (v1-8) and leads to the supposition that behind v1-2 lies a tacit objection to inauthentic cultic service.

The sleep of obduracy in v9-14 counterbalances the welcome dream of deliverance in v8. V9-14 offset the hopeful impression given in v1-8 and the complex ends on a note of confusion. The major unifying principle of the woe complex is the focus of each section on vision and

the use each makes of extended simile in relation to the vision. The juxtaposition of v1-8 and v9-14 creates a tension of weal and woe in ch 29. The tension builds suspense and creates interest. It stresses the contingency of weal and woe on the people's response and the freedom of God. Exum [349] suggests that the referent of כָּל in 29:11, which Wildberger [1112] thinks is an addition, may be taken as the vision of deliverance in 1-8; in this case, the vision of deliverance may also be part of the inaccessible message - a message lost on a people without understanding.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 1

אַרְיֵאל: Apart from Isa 29:1,2,7, the word appears in 2 Sam 23:20; 1 Chron 11:22; Ez 43:15,16. Wildberger [1098] draws attention to the proper name in Ezra 8:16. IQIsa reads אֲרִיֵּאל but Kutscher [97] states that the difference between א and א' is often very tenuous. LXX has πόλις Ἀριηλ which reads as the MT. Vermeylen [1977: 401] compares אֲרִיֵּאל (adopting 1QIsa) to the Akkadian *urusalim(u)* an old name for Jerusalem, attested in the El-Amarna letters. It is unusual to find a proper name in a woe oracle but Vermeylen points out that if it meant "city of El", it would be a title for the city.

Others see in Ariel the title אֲרִי אֵל "lion of God" but Wildberger's suggestion [1098] is best. He takes it to mean "altar hearth" as in Ez 43:15, 16; the word with the same meaning is also found in the Mesha Inscription line 12. The altar hearth as the holiest part of the Temple stands for the holy city of Jerusalem. Exum [1981: 344] agrees, identifying the technique as *metonymy*.

קִרְיָה in First Isaiah refers to the city of Jerusalem in 1:21,26; 22:2; 29:1;



33:20 and probably also in 32:13 because of the parallel עמי. In 24:10; 25:3; 26:5, the city denotes the inhabitants of the earth opposed to the righteous.

The noun קריה is always qualified:

1:21	קריה נאמנה
1:26	קריה נאמנה
22:2	קריה עליזה
24:10	קרית תהו
25:2	קריה בצורה
25:3	קרית גוים עריצים
26:5	קריה נשגבה
29:1	קרית חנה רור
32:13	קריה עליזה
33:20	קרית מוערנו

It is nearly always found in a negative context - even קריה נאמנה in 1:21,26 forms an *inclusio* around a threatening passage. The stability and security of the image of the city with its fixed feasts in 33:20 contrasts with the image of a city whose feasts provide a false sense of security in 29:1.

חנה occurs only in 29:1 in Isaiah. It is found most frequently in the Pentateuch, particularly in the Book of Numbers where it occurs approximately 60 times.

רור: David occurs in Isa 7:2,13; 9:6; 16:5; 22:22; 29:1. Israel is called "the house of David" in 7:2,13; 22:22; in 9:6 the "throne of David" is established and in 16:5, the tent of David is mentioned. David is associated with Jerusalem in 2 Sam 5:7-9; 6:10,12,16.

שנה: Expressions of time with the noun יום occur in Isa 28:19,24;

expressions of time with the noun שנה occur in 21:16 and 29:1. The phrase in 29:1 is similar to that found in 32:10 ימים על-שנה.

אז: The noun אז appears in Isaiah in 29:1 and 30:29. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, it is used with reference to the Passover in Ez 45:17,21,23,25; to the feast of Booths in Zech 14:16,18,19. The feasts are sometimes threatened because of Israel's behaviour (Hos 2:13; 9:5; Amos 5:21; 8:10) but in Nah 2:1, in the future days of peace, the feasts will once more be assured. The noun אז appears only twice in Isaiah in 29:1 and 30:29. Some similarities may be noted between the two contexts: in 29:2, the passage opens with a condemnation of the city where feasts are held while in 30:29 the people are joyful as at a holy feast. In 29:5f, Yahweh fights for Ariel against its enemies while in 30:29f, Yahweh fights for Mount Zion. The description of the means Yahweh uses as his instruments is similar in both passages especially the loud voice in 29:6 and the majestic voice in 30:30; also the flame of a devouring fire is mentioned in both texts. The destruction of Zion's enemies takes place in both 29:7-8 and 30:32-33.

אקף II: The verb occurs in Isa 15:8 and 29:1. Elsewhere (1) it always has the meaning "to surround". Apart from Isa 29:1, the only other text where it is used to express an element of time is Job 1:5 which the RSV translates "when the days of the feast had run their course".

## Verse 2

V2-4 contain words which build up a dramatic picture of the distress which Yahweh brings upon Jerusalem.

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1. Lev 19:27; Josh 6:3,11; 1 Kgs 7:24; 2 Kgs 6:4; 11:8; 2 Chron 4:3; 23:7; Job 1:5; 19:6; Ps 17:9; 22:17; 48:13; 88:18.

והציקותי: The verb צוק occurs in Isa 29:2,7; 51:13. Elsewhere it occurs in Deut 28:53,55,57; Judg 14:17; 16:16; Job 32:18; Jer 19:9. The verb which always occurs in the hiphil means "to apply pressure" either physically or psychologically. In Judges, Delilah applies pressure to Samson by her words (16:16) and on another occasion by crying for seven days until Samson finally capitulates (14:17). In Job 32:18, it is the "spirit within him" which pressurizes him. Pressure can also be applied physically. The refrain

מצוק אשר-יציק לך איביר

is found in Deut 28:53,55,57; Jer 19:9. Both contexts are similar. If the people do not obey the word of Yahweh, he will cause Israel's enemies to oppress her. In Isa 29:2 it is Yahweh who oppresses Ariel until such times as he decides that those who oppress Ariel must stop (v7). The word occurs in Second Isaiah in 51:13 to describe the enemy of whom Israel is afraid, yet who is infinitely less powerful than God.

תאניה ואניה: The root אנה occurs in Isa 3:26; 19:8; 29:2; Lam 2:5. In 3:26 and 19:8 the phrase אנו ואנלו occurs: in 29:2 and Lam 2:5 the two words תאניה אניה appear together. The mourning and lamentation are always brought about by Yahweh .. against Israel in Isa 3:26; 29:2; Lam 2:5; and against Egypt in Isa 19:8.

### Verse 3

כרוך: LXX reads ὡς Δαυδ which is כרוך in Hebrew. Syr and Vulg support the MT reading "like the circle". Wildberger [1098] notes that the Arabic *dara* and Akkadian *duru* both have the same idea of a circle. He also notes that in the LXX, the comparison is wrong since David did not encamp against Jerusalem as Yahweh does in this text. Barthélemy

[203] translates "camp in a circle against".

צרה: The verb occurs in prophetic literature in Isa 21:3; 29:3; Jer 21:4,9; 32:2; 37:5; 39:1; Ez 4:3; 5:3. The noun צרה is found in Isa 8:22; 31:6; 33:2; 37:3; 46:7; 63:9; 65:16. Isa 8:22 concerns the gloom and anguish that the people bring upon themselves. In 33:2; 63:9, Yahweh is a helper in time of distress; the idol, on the other hand, is helpless in time of trouble in 46:7. In 65:16, the former troubles will be forgotten.

The root צרה is similar in meaning to צוק to which it is often parallel e.g. 8:22; 30:6. The two verbs, one in 29:2, the other in 29:3, have similar meanings within the present context. The noun מצור also from the root צרה occurs only in 29:3 in Isaiah. BDB [849] translates it as "siegeworks", a parallel to the hapax מצב which it translates as "entrenchment". The choice of מצרות echoing the verb צרה adds to the language of distress in the passage.

קום: The hiphil of קום to express the punitive action of Yahweh recalls a similar use of the verb in Isa 28:21 and occurs again in 31:2. The "rising up of Yahweh", expressed by both קום and רום, against the wicked and evil doer, contrasts with the "going down" of the people, expressed by יר in 30:2 and 31:2. Yahweh himself comes down to fight upon Mt Zion in 31:4.

שפל: In the OT the root occurs 27 times, 13 of which are found in

Isaiah (1). It is seldom found elsewhere in prophetic literature (2). In the overwhelming majority of cases, the verb is used to denote the lowering of the proud, haughty or ruthless or the raising up of the lowly (3). This is also true of the noun שָׁפַל, the masculine of the form שָׁפַלָה, found in Isa 32:19, which occurs in Ps 136:23 and Qoh 10:6.

In Isa 10:33 and Ez 17:24, it concerns the lowering of trees; even here, the theme of the humbling of the proud is implicit. Isa 10:33 refers to the lowering of the pride of Assyria while Ez 17:24 refers to the lowering of the mighty.

In Isa 26:5; 29:4; 32:19, the context concerns the destruction of a city. In 29:4, the city is Jerusalem but in 32:19, it is an alien hostile city. Isa 32:19 is a late addition. It may be that many of the other verses which contain the verb in Isaiah are also late additions and perhaps connected to each other, e.g. 2:9,11,12,17. The redactor responsible for 5:15 may have alluded intentionally to these verses. In 10:33-34, an interpretation is offered to the reader which either looks back retrospectively to ch 10 or is linked to ch 11. In 25:11-12, Clements [1980a: 209-10] suggests that the mention of the lowering of the pride of Moab in v11 has suggested to a later redactor the idea that this will also mean the lowering of their high fortifications. In v12, the verb שָׁפַל, omitted in the LXX, may be a later gloss in this redactional verse. Clements [1980a: 212] suggests that the author of 26:5 was influenced by 25:12 or vice versa. Whedbee [72] argues that the lowering of the proud is a specifically wisdom theme but does not deal with these verses because in his view they do not come

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1. Isa 2:9,11,12,17; 5:15; 10:33; 25:1,12; 26:5; 29:4; 32:19; 40:4; 57:9.
  2. Once in Jer 13:8; twice in Ez, 17:24 and 21:31. It occurs in other isolated texts: 1 Sam 2:7; 2 Sam 22:28; Job 22:29; Ps 75:8; 113:6; 147:6; Prov 25:7; 29:23.
  3. 1 Sam 2:7; 2 Sam 2:28; Job 22:29; 40:11; Prov 25:7; 29:23; Isa 2:9,11,12, 17; 5:15; 13:11; 25:11; Jer 13:8.

from Isaiah.

קול: The weakness of the speech of the people contrasts with אמרה in the summons to listen in 28:22 and 32:9 and with the mighty voice of Yahweh, קול, throughout the section.

עפר: The word occurs in First Isaiah in 2:10,19; 25:12; 26:5,19; 29:4; 34:7,9; and in Second Isaiah in 40:12; 41:2; 47:1; 49:23; 52:2; 65:25. In most cases, it is used figuratively to show the lowliness and impotence of man faced with the power and might of God, 2:10,19; 25:12; 26:5; 41:2; 47:1; 49:23. The reverse is true in 52:2 where Jerusalem, now chastized, is urged to shake the dust off her feet. In 26:19, it is the dead who lie in the dust.

ארץ and עפר are parallel in Isa 25:12; 26:5; 29:4; 34:7,9; 40:12; 49:23. Wildberger [1107] states that sometimes they are synonymous with Sheol. In this case, the people's voice is like the voice of the dead. Central to the woe oracle is the threat of death and Wildberger thinks v4 is particularly suitable in this context. He understands [1099] the verb שחח as a noise of the dead - a verb which Driver [1968: 51] derives from an Akkadian word *sahha*, to pour out words.

אוב: The word in the OT normally appears with הירענים. RSV translates the word pair as "mediums and sorcerers". These people and the advice they give must be totally rejected because they undermine faith and

trust in Yahweh (1). In Isaiah, the word occurs 3 times: 8:19; 19:3; 29:4. In the first two texts, as in the rest of the OT, it occurs as part of the phrase "mediums and sorcerers". In 29:4, it occurs as a simile to describe the voice of the people rising out of the ground. Clements [1980a: 236] remarks that the currency of various necromantic rites may have encouraged the prophet to use such a simile.

חַלְלִי: The root occurs only in the pilpel form and only in Isaiah in 8:19; 10:14; 29:4; 38:14. One gets the impression from 10:14 and 38:14 where it describes the moaning of a bird that it is an onomatopoeic word. In 8:19, it refers to the warbling of the mediums and sorcerers. In 29:4b, the simile of the חַלְלִי may be consciously connected with the sound חַלְלִי. In any case, with so many words in v4 suggesting low muttering sounds, חַלְלִי as an onomatopoeic word is quite apt to round off the section. Buis [49] remarks that the three main actors (Yahweh, Zion, the enemy) are related to each other by their "acoustic qualities". Zion is reduced to a murmur in v4; the enemy are a noisy group in v5 and Yahweh comes with great noise in v6.

### Verse 5

אֶבֶן דָּק: The phrase is not found elsewhere in the OT. The noun אֶבֶן is quite rare. Apart from those texts where it has its literal meaning "dust" (Neh 1:3; Cant 3:6; Ez 26:10), it is found in Ex 9:9 where dust becomes boils on the skin of the Egyptians and in Deut 28:24 where Yahweh promises to turn the rain into dust if the people do not listen to his word.

In Isaiah אֶבֶן occurs in 5:24; 29:3. In 5:24, it occurs as part of an image which describes the fate of the wicked; as in Deut 28:24, dust suggests

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1. Deut 18:11; Lev 19:31; 20:6,27; 1 Sam 28:3,7,8,9; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; 1 Chron 10:13; 33:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3; 29:4.

the barrenness of those who refuse to hear the word of Yahweh. Isa 5:24 has much in common with 33:11-12; it is the wicked and not an external enemy who are being condemned. It is also worth noting that the barren images of the land in 29:5 contrast with the fruitful activity of the farmer in 28:23-29 and with the fertility of Lebanon in 29:17f.

רַק: The adjective from the verb רָקַק occurs most often in Genesis ch 41, in the story of the seven thin and seven fat cows. In prophetic literature, it is found only in Isa 29:5 and 40:15. In both cases, it is a simile used to express the insignificance of Israel's enemies before God. The verb רָקַק is found twice in Isa 28:28 and in Isa 41:15 and Mic 4:13. In all these texts, the verb is used as part of the imagery of threshing.

כַּמֶּץ עֵבֶר: The simile כַּמֶּץ is found in Ps 1:4; 35:5; Job 21:18; Isa 17:13; 29:5; 41:15; Hos 13:3; Zeph 2:2. In all cases, it presents an image of evil people or of Israel's enemies fleeing like chaff before Yahweh. The phrase כַּמֶּץ עֵבֶר appears in both Isa 29:5 and Zeph 2:2. The use of the simile in Isa 17:13 is very similar to Isa 29:5 in that it is used of Yahweh quelling the power of the nations who fight against Israel. The context of 17:12-14 suggests that the nations are identified as the wicked who are opposed to the just, referred to in the first person plural in v14.

הַמֶּוֹן זֶרֶךְ: The word הַמֶּוֹן occurs 10 times in First Isaiah: 5:14; 13:4; 16:14; 17:12; 29:5,7,8; 31:4; 32:14; 33:3. It can denote great noise, often associated with the noun קוֹל as in 17:12; 31:4; 33:3. It is usually applied to the nations as in 13:4. In 16:14, it refers to the multitude of Moab; in 17:12 it refers to the thundering of many nations; in 29:5, it refers to the wicked and ruthless; in 29:7,8, it refers to the multitude of nations hostile to Zion. As part of the simile in 31:4, it refers to the nations



which fight against Mount Zion. In 33:3, the term is applied to Yahweh but in the context of the nations.

זָרִיךְ: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 1:7; 17:10; 25:2,5; 28:21; 29:5; 61:5. However, the same difficulty exists with the plural in 25:2,5 as in 29:5, i.e. whether the word is זָרִים or זָרִיךְ. In favour of the MT in 29:5 is the fact that the word by its very nature suggests an outside enemy and so is suitable in view of the apparent threat of v7-8. Furthermore, the word זָרִיךְ both in the singular and plural occurs 7 times in Isaiah (assuming 25:2,5) as opposed to one single example of זָרִים (13:11). In favour of the alternative זָרִים is the fact that it occurs parallel to עֲרִיצִים in Isa 13:11 and in Ps 86:14 (1). It possibly suggests an impious group within Israel rather than a strong external threat. Most scholars try to determine which of the two words is preferable. If the word is זָרִיךְ (Duhm [184], Marti [213], Fohrer [1967a: 71]), then it is argued that the word refers to an external enemy and so v5f constitute a promise, separate from the woe oracle of v1-4.

If, on the other hand, the word is זָרִיךְ (1QIsa, Wildberger [1099], Barth [185]), then it is taken to refer to an internal enemy, a group of impious Jews and so v5 would then continue the threat of judgment begun in v1-4.

However, it does not necessarily follow that if v5 refers to an internal group that this is proof of Isaian authorship. Given the associations of the rest of the vocabulary, it is more likely to reflect the concerns of the late Jewish community who identified the nations as the wicked within their midst.

According to Barthélemy [204], זרים in Jer 51:2, has the double meaning of "strangers" and "winnowers" - an interesting suggestion considering the context of the harvest in which it occurs. In support of the idea of "winnowers", one might add that in Akkadian the root *zeru* means "seed", "fodder", "barley" [von Soden: 1521].

עריצים: The noun occurs in Isa 13:11; 25:3-5; 29:5; 29:20; 49:25. Elsewhere it generally denotes the mighty and powerful (1). From the texts where the word occurs in Isaiah, the characteristics of the עריץ can be deduced. In 13:11, haughtiness and pride are their sin; in 25:3-5; 29:20, they oppress the righteous and their sin is one of social injustice. Their companions in 13:11 are the זרים and in 29:20, the לץ.

Laberge [1978: 24-25] notes that the LXX missed the point of the MT in translating המון עריצים by "the riches of the ungodly". He also notes that the phrase המון עריצים in the MT may have been a gloss to explain המון זריר, the origin of the gloss being 13:11.

לפתע פתאום: The noun פתע occurs in Prov 6:15; 29:1; Hab 2:7. Disaster comes upon the unsuspecting wicked suddenly in Prov 6:15; 29:1 but variations of the phrase פתע פתאום occur in Num 6:9; 35:22; Isa 30:13. The contexts of the phrase in Isaiah are more similar to Proverbs than to Numbers. Striking is the fact that the phrase is found in close proximity in Isa 29-30 and nowhere else in prophetic literature. In 29:5, the suddenness of Yahweh's visitation upon the wicked is similar to the suddenness of the disaster which, in 30:13, he brings upon those who do not obey the instruction of Yahweh in 30:9f. This may add support to the argument that זריר and עריצים refer to the wicked within Jerusalem.

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1. Job 6:23; 15:20; 27:13; Ps 37:35; 54:5; 86:14; Prov 11:16; Jer 15:21;

Verse 6

יהוה צבאות picks up the phrase of 28:29 which in turn is related to 28:22. The reflection in 28:29 that Yahweh acts in all wisdom tempers his punitive action in 28:22 and 29:6.

פקר: This verb in Isaiah always has a negative meaning of harming or punishing (1). Quite often the subject of the verb is Yahweh (10:12; 13:4,11; 23:17; 24:21,22; 26:14,21; 29:6). V6 is most similar to 13:11 where Yahweh comes to punish the זרים and ערצים. In 26:14,21, and possibly 24:21,22, it is the wicked whom Yahweh comes to punish.

V6 presents a comprehensive list of elements which Yahweh uses to fight and destroy the wicked. The same list, which is anthological in style, is not found elsewhere:

- (a) רעם only occurs in prophetic literature in Isaiah. Elsewhere it occurs in Job (26:14; 39:19,25) and Psalms (8:8; 77:19; 104:7).
- (b) רעש: As well as in Isa 29:6, the word occurs in prophetic literature in Jer 10:22; 47:3; Ez 3:12,13; 12:18; 37:7; 38:19; Nah 3:2; Amos 1:1. It also occurs in 1 Kgs 19:11,12; Job 39:21; 41:21.
- (c) קול גדול resembles הור-קולו in Isa 30:30.
- (d) סופה occurs in Isa 5:28; 17:13; 21:1; 29:6 (2).
- (e) סערה occurs in Isa 29:6; 40:24; 41:16 (3). The words סופה

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- 1. Isa 10:12,28; 13:4,11; 23:17; 24:21,22; 26:14,16,21; 27:3; 29:6; 34:16; 38:10.
  - 2. Elsewhere in Job 21:18; 27:20; 37:9; Ps 83:16; Prov 1:27; 10:25; Jer 4:13; Hos 8:7; Amos 1:14; Nah 1:3.
  - 3. Elsewhere in 2 Kgs 2:1,11; Job 38:1; 40:6; Ps 55:9; 83:16; 107:25,29; 148:8; Jer 23:19; 25:32; 30:23; Ez 1:4; 13:13:11,13; Amos 1:4; Jonah 1:4,12; Zech 9:14.

סערה occur together in Ps 83:16; Isa 29:6; Amos 1:14.

- (f) ללהב אש אוכלה: The phrase occurs in Isa 29:6; 30:30 and Joel 2:5, the latter in a Day of Yahweh context. Flames of fire are often associated with Yahweh. In Ps 29:7, he sends forth flames of fire. In Isa 10:17, the light of Israel will become a fire and the Holy One a flame.

### Verse 7

חלם is only found in Isaiah in 29:7,8. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, it is found in Jer 23:25,27,28,32; 27:9; 29:8; where it always refers to the dreams of the prophets. In Joel 3:1, where old men dream dreams and young men see visions, it is also in a context of prophecy. Perhaps the simile in Isa 29:7,8, may be compared to Ps 73:20; 126:1 where a dream simply means something unbelievable and incredible. However the roots חזה and חלם, found together, refer to the visions of prophets in Num 12:6; Deut 13:2.

חזון: The noun occurs in 1:1 which introduces the vision of Isaiah. The verb חזה is used of Isaiah in 1:1; 2:1; 13:1 and of the seers in 30:10. In 33:17,20, the verb acts as a parallel to ראה. The noun חזון occurs in 21:2 which refers to the vision of Isaiah and in 22:1,5; 29:11. The noun חזים, seers, occurs in 29:10; 30:10. Unlike חלם and חזון elsewhere, the words in Isa 29:7 occur as part of a simile which expresses the incoherence and futility of those who attack Ariel. It anticipates the theme of incoherence and drunkenness in v10-11. The unsuccessful and confused attack of the nations in v7-8 contrasts with the dramatic intervention of Yahweh in v6.

גוים occurs some 30 times in First Isaiah. The frequency of the word reflects the on-going conflict between the nations and Yahweh. Within

28-33, it is found in 29:7,8; 30:28; 33:3. In 33:3, the nations are identified with the wicked. The theme of Yahweh attacking the nations is picked up in earnest in 34:1f.

צבא: The verb is used in 29:7,8, and 31:4; the noun in 13:4; 24:21; 34:2,4. The most common use of the word is in the phrase יהוה צבאות which occurs some 50 times in First Isaiah. In 13:4; 31:4, it is Yahweh who prepares to fight. In 24:21, it is the host of heaven. In 29:7,8, it is the multitude who fight against Mt Zion. The similarity between the use of the verb in 29:7 and 31:4 suggests a connection between the two passages. In both cases it may be the wicked and unjust who are identified as the enemies of Zion.

For מצרתה 1QIsa reads מצרתיה and Wildberger [1100] agrees with this because it provides a better parallel to צביה. It would also provide a better parallel to מציקים since צוק and צרה occur together often.

### Verse 8.

רעב occurs 6 times in First Isaiah (5:13; 8:21; 9:19; 14:30; 29:8; 32:6) and 6 times in Second Isaiah (44:12; 49:10; 51:19; 58:7,10; 65:13). In 5:13; 8:21; 14:30; 29:8; 51:19; 65:13, lack of food signifies a punishment from Yahweh. In 32:6 and 58:7,10, the word occurs in a context of social justice. In 32:6, the word has close parallels with Job 22:7; Prov 25:21; Ez 18:7,16 where to alleviate hunger and thirst is the sign of the just man. The phrase נפש רעבה occurs in 1 Sam 2:5; Ps 107:5,9,36 where it is a characteristic of Yahweh to satisfy the hungry.

צוק: The hiphil occurs in Isa 26:19 and 29:8.

רִיק: The verb is only found in the hiphil and occurs once in Isaiah in 32:6. Elsewhere the verb denotes the unsheathing of the sword (1) or simply the idea of emptying (2).

The adjective רִיק, meaning "useless", is found in 30:7 to describe the help of Egypt. In 29:8, the phrase נפש ריקה נפש רעב resembles להריק נפש רעב in 32:6.

צמא: The root occurs 8 times in Isaiah (5:13; 21:14; 29:8; 32:6; 41:17; 44:3; 50:2; 55:1). In 5:13; 29:8; 32:6 (also 2 Sam 17:29; Ps 107:5; Prov 25:21) צמא and רעב occur together. Often it is the righteous who are thirsty and whom Yahweh satisfies: 21:14; 32:6; 41:17; 55:1.

שתה: The verb occurs 12 times in Isaiah (5:22; 21:5; 22:13; 24:9; 25:6; 29:8; 44:12; 51:17,22; 62:8,9; 65:13). In 29:8, the verb anticipates the theme of drunkenness in v9f. The image of the wicked feeling thirsty reverses the image of the wicked drinking to excess in 5:22; 22:13; 24:9. In 44:12, the wicked man who creates idols feels thirsty and faints. The righteous, on the other hand, are not thirsty (25:6). While the righteous eat and drink the wicked will go hungry and thirsty. Jerusalem has drunk the cup of Yahweh's wrath in 51:17,22.

עִיף: Kaiser [1974: 264] and Wildberger [1100] with BHS omit עִיף as a gloss. The word occurs in Isa 5:27,28; 12:12; 29:8; 32:2; 46:1. In Ps 143:6; Isa 28:12; 32:2; Jer 31:25, Yahweh gives rest to the weary but in 29:8, there is no rest for the wicked.

שוקקה: (see the noun משקה in 32:6). The feminine polel participle is

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1. Ex 15:9; Lev 26:33; Ez 28:7; Mal 3:10.
  2. Gen 42:35; Zech 4:12.

found only in Isa 29:8 and Ps 107:9 where Yahweh satisfies the thirsty and hungry who are identified as the righteous.

To fight against **לִצְיֹן** may be synonymous in the eyes of the author with fighting against the righteous, whose characteristics are justice and righteousness. In 28:16 and 33:5, Zion is associated with these characteristics and in 31:9-32:1 justice and righteousness may also be linked with Zion. In 29:29, the righteous go to the mountain of the Yahweh which he protects (31:5,9).

In v8, the image of the wicked as hungry and thirsty contrasts with the image of the hungry and thirsty used to denote the righteous elsewhere in the OT. Yahweh satisfies the righteous who are hungry and thirsty. This may also explain the addition of **וְלִצְיֹן** since elsewhere Yahweh also protects the weary. In v8, the use of the same words to describe both the righteous and the wicked intensifies the contrast between the two groups.

Within 28-33, v8 may be associated with 32:6; firstly because of the close similarity in vocabulary. Secondly, because the wicked, who act contrary to Yahweh in depriving the hungry of food and drink (32:6), in turn feel the pangs of hunger and thirst themselves. Such ideas in v8 would suggest that the redactor who added v8 interpreted v1-7 in the light of the struggle between the righteous and the wicked. It is an important addition since it influences the way one reads the chapter. V9 follows naturally after v7; both verses are concerned with the vision

which is beyond comprehension (1).

## CONTEXT

One of the major obstacles to a consistent interpretation of 29:1-8 is the frequent change of subject. In v1 Ariel is addressed: in v2 Ariel moves into the third person but in v3-4 it is addressed once more in the second person. A second obstacle is the fact that the unit is composite: images mushroom and become confusing, e.g. while it is Yahweh who besieges Ariel in v3, it is the nations in v7.

It is helpful therefore to interpret 29:1-8 within the wider context of chs 28-33. 29:1-8 sustains many of the themes and motifs introduced in ch 28. 29:1 constitutes the second in the series of woe oracles. Like 28:1, it refers to a former time of glory: in the case of Ephraim, one is reminded of its former power and in the case of Ariel, of its association with David. The oracle against Ariel continues the threat to Jerusalem delivered in 28:14-22. As in 28:16-17, it is a purified Zion that the redactor has in mind. 29:4 with its emphasis on death and the underworld compares with the reference to Mot and Sheol in 28:15. The action of raising siegeworks in 29:3 (הקִימָתִי) is prepared for by the threat that Yahweh's rising up at Mt. Perazim in 28:21 (יָקוּם) will be strange and alien.

In 29:4, there is an emphasis on speech (תַּרְבִּירִי, אִמְרָתֶךָ, קוֹלֶךָ, צִפְצָפָה). Elsewhere the parallel אִמְרָה, קוֹל is found only in Isa 28:23 and 32:9 and refers to the speech of Yahweh. The noun קוֹל is used to express the power of Yahweh (29:6) and רִבֵּר is used of his word (28:14).

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1. The theme of lack of understanding is already present in 28:9f.



Consequently the contrast is striking between the lowly, ineffective and futile words of man in 29:4 (enhanced by such vocabulary as שפלת מארץ, כעפר, כאוב מארץ) and the words of Yahweh which are delivered with authority and effectiveness (28:12, 16-17, 23).

מַעַם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in 29:6 resumes the theme of Yahweh's destruction of the wicked in 28:22 but is qualified in the interim by the same phrase in 28:29 which stresses that Yahweh's negative actions are carried out in all wisdom.

There are many indications that, whatever the origin of the woe oracle against Ariel in v1-3, the present section v1-8 aims to present the evil and wicked within Jerusalem as the real threat to its survival. The parallel words עֲרִיצִים, זָרִים denote the haughty who oppress the righteous. In the reversal which takes place in v17-24, the עֲרִיצִים are removed (v20). The phrase לַפֶּתַע פִּתְאֹם, only found twice in prophetic literature in 29:5 and 30:13, refers in both cases to the sudden downfall of the wicked. The verb פָּקַד is often used of Yahweh punishing the haughty and evil (Isa 13:11). The elements of the theophany in v6 are used again of Yahweh in his dramatic intervention in 30:27-28.

The wicked are compared to dust and chaff (v5) and experience hunger and thirst (v8). Such images resume the theme of the forces of nature introduced in ch 28. Those who despise the word of Yahweh in Isa 5:24 are compared to dust (אֶבֶק). In Isa 17:12-14, the nations (identified as the wicked) flee like chaff before Yahweh. Both similes are taken from the image of the harvest and contrast with the use of the same image in 28:27-28. The wicked do not enjoy the natural prosperity of the just: the dust and barrenness of the landscape in 29:4-5

contrast with the picture of fruitfulness in 29:17. In v6, Yahweh channels the destructive forces of nature against the wicked.

The purpose of v8 may be to identify those who do not understand in v9f as the wicked and ruthless of v5f. If this is the case, v8 may be an instance of conscious editorial work in joining together the theme of lack of understanding with the struggle between the righteous and wicked.

The intensity and ambiguity of the language and imagery of 29:1-8 sustain the tension of the passage until its resolution in v7-8 with the destruction of the wicked. The ambiguity, which has been allowed to remain by later editors, results in offering a message to both the righteous and the wicked. The helplessness of man's word, as opposed to Yahweh's, is held up as a warning to all in v4. The treatment of the ruthless in v5 as chaff warns of the conditional nature of Yahweh's gift of the harvest in 28:23-29. The suddenness of his intervention in v5 applies to all who reject his word (30:12). V8 reminds the reader that it is Yahweh who satisfies the hungry, thirsty and weary.

' In short, in the context of chs 28-33, v1-8 offer a positive message in a negative guise; it continues the theme of ch 28 and, by painting a picture of what happens to the wicked, motivates and encourages the reader to listen to the word of Yahweh. Such reflections anticipate further exploration of these themes which are emphasized by repetition in chs 29-33.

Isaiah 29: 9-16

## INTRODUCTION

There is general consensus that v9-16 contains three short independent sayings (v9-10, v13-14, v15-16) authentic to Isaiah with a later insertion comprising v11-12. Vermeylen [1977: 404] sees v9-10 as originally coming after v7; the theme of the deep sleep corresponds to the motif of the nocturnal vision of v7. Kaiser [1974: 269] attributes v9-10 to Isaiah but adds that the passage lent itself to a reflection on the theology of God's hardening of men's hearts contained in the commission of the prophet in 6: 9-10.

The purpose of v11-12, according to Clements [1980a: 406], is to urge greater attention to the message of the prophet. The vision in v11 is the promise of Jerusalem's deliverance - now interpreted eschatologically as a promise of the final exaltation and triumph of the city. V11-12 is a good illustration of the way the message of the prophet was revitalized in the post exilic age and understood in an eschatological sense. Vermeylen [1977: 406] notes that the motif of the book is apocalyptic and finds a similar theme in Dan 12:9; Enoch 93:10; Apoc 10:8-11.

According to Wildberger [1113], v13-14 with its antithesis is typical of Isaiah's style. As proof of its authenticity, Wildberger points to the use of אָלֵם in the "Isaian texts" of 9:5 and 28:29 (1): the roots אָלֵם and אָלֵם also come together in 5:21; 10:13 and 11:2. The speech opens with an address to everyone but ends with specific groups "wise men" and "understanding men". The passage refers to a very specific situation. It

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1 The authenticity of both verses is disputed by Childs [1967: 31, 63], Vermeylen [1977: 248, 401], and Barth

contains no doctrine and formulates no clear message; no generalized picture of Isaiah's view of the cult or of wisdom can be drawn from these verses.

Of the three sections (v9-10, v13-14, v15-16), v15-16 is the only one that scholars hesitate to attribute to Isaiah. Kaiser [1974: 275] sees a structure in v15-16; a woe in v15 followed by a cry of reproach in v16a followed by three didactic questions. He discusses the possibility that the verses may come from a later time when ruling classes oppressed the needy but finally attributes it to Isaiah. Wildberger [1128] notes that v15-16 were added here because of their similarity in theme to v13-14 and because of the vocabulary link of סתר in v14b and 15a. He notes that there is no idea or phrase in v15-16 that cannot be attributed to Isaiah. The fact that the image of the potter is present elsewhere in the OT simply shows that Isaiah borrowed an image as he does elsewhere with other images e.g. 22:13; 28:20 (1). Dietrich [170] also argues for the authenticity of v15-16, pointing out the similarity in vocabulary, מעשה, הוי, ידע, ראה, עצה with 5:18f. He dates v15-16 to the political situation of 701.

'Vermeulen [1977: 406] rejects the authenticity of v16. He believes that it is not impossible that v9-10, v13-14, v15 formed a unity before being inserted here. V15 forms a complete oracle by itself, similar to 5:18-19; 5:20,21,22-23. V16 adds nothing to v15 and is in fact a transformation of 45:9.

Exum's proposal (discussed in the previous section) that v1-14 are united by the theme of the cult present in v1 and v14 must also be kept in mind. It adds support to an approach that reads the chapter as a

20 comes from Isaiah.

literary whole and is more convincing than any attempt to recover isolated "authentic" sayings of the prophet within the composite unit of v 9-16.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 9

מה: The root in its various forms (1) means "to delay". As Wildberger suggests [1112], the word is more consistent with its context if it is emended to מהתמה, the hithpael of תמה which occurs in the hithpael in Hab 1:5. Elsewhere the root occurs in Gen 43:33; Job 26:11; Ps 48:6; Qoh 5:7; Isa 13:8; 29:9; Jer 4:9, always with the meaning "to be astonished". A noun from the root occurs in Deut 28:28, where it refers to confusion of the heart, and in Zech 12:4. In Ps 48:6; Isa 13:8; Jer 4:9, it is Yahweh who causes the people to be astonished.

השתעשעו is the hithpael form of שעע. Wildberger [1112] translates שעע I as "to cover or paste over". Where the hithpael occurs elsewhere, (Ps 119:16,47) it generally means "to delight in". Other forms of the verb also express joy or gladness, the pilpal in Ps 94:19; 119:70; Isa 11:8; the pulpal in Isa 66:12. The hiphil occurs in the commissioning story of Isa 6:10, to "cover over" the eyes of the people. In 32:3 Wildberger [1250] opts for תשעינה which comes from the same root. Watts [384] suggests that שעה is another possibility for the root of the word, a verb attested in Isa 17:7; 22:4; 31:1; 41:10. The close proximity of the two verbs intensifies the meaning: Wildberger [1114] states that when two imperatives are joined by *copulativum* the first denotes a

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1. Gen 19:16; 43:16; Ex 12:39; Judg 3:26; 19:8; 2 Sam 15:28; Ps 119:60; Hab 2:3.

stipulation and the second a result or fulfilment of the stipulation. Irwin [55] suggests that the use of two forms from the same root acts as *hendiadys*.

שכרו נעו in v9b are unlikely to be in the perfect tense after the imperatives of v9a; Wildberger [1112] points them as imperatives.

שכר, יין: The nouns resume the theme of drunkenness found in 28:1,3,7 but this time in a figurative sense and are used to convey the notion of confusion.

נוע occurs in 6:4; 7:2; 19:1; 24:20; 29:9. Elsewhere in the OT, it seems to appear once in practically every book so that no pattern emerges but it is found most often in the Psalms (22:8; 59:12,16; 107:21; 109:10,25) where it often refers to the activity of the wicked man.

#### Verse 10

נסך occurs in Isaiah in 29:10; 30:1; 40:19; 44:10. It generally denotes the pouring out of a liquid or libation, e.g. Hos 9:4. This may also be the meaning behind 30:1. Therefore, the verb in 29:10 may consciously pick up the motif of the wine and drink in v9. It is the deep sleep that God is pouring upon them that makes them stupid – and not strong drink.

תרדמה: The verb occurs in Judg 4:21; Ps 76:7; Prov 10:5; Dan 8:18; 10:9; Jonah 1:6 and the noun in Gen 2:21; 15:12; 1 Sam 26:12; Job 4:13; 33:15; Prov 19:15. In most cases the deep sleep comes from Yahweh and is often the means by which a vision is communicated (Gen 15:12; Job 33:15; Dan 8:18; 10:9). Wildberger [1115] states that the use of the word in 29:10 emphasizes that the blindness of the political leaders comes from

Yahweh himself.

The spirit רוּחַ of deep sleep poured upon the wicked contrasts with Yahweh's spirit of justice poured out in 28:6 and 32:15 which has an opposite effect.

עָצַם III: The verb occurs in 29:10 and 33:15 meaning "to close" the eyes. Wildberger [1115] notes that in medieval Hebrew the verb is used for the closing of the eyes of a dead person.

כָּסָה: The piel occurs in Num 9:15; 22:5; Job 15:7; 23:17; 36:30,32; Ps 78:53; Ez 18:16; Hab 3:3; in Job 23:17, thick darkness covers the face of Job. In Isaiah, the root occurs in 6:2; 11:9; 14:11; 23:18; 26:21; and in 51:16; 58:7; 59:6; 60:2; 60:6.

נְבִיאִים, חֲזִיִּים: Apart from the phrase "Isaiah the prophet" in 37:2; 38:1; 39:3, the word נְבִיא appears in a list in 3:2 and in 9:14 in the phrase "the prophet who teaches lies". In 28:7, the prophet "reels with drink" and in 29:10 a deep sleep falls upon them. 29:10 is the only verse in Isaiah where the word occurs in the plural.

חֲזִיִּים occurs in 29:10; 30:10. The combination of prophets and seers does not occur elsewhere. The seers are connected with the vision in v7 and 11. Both words are generally regarded as additions to the text. Wildberger [1112] believes that the imperatives were originally addressed to the leaders of Jerusalem and only subsequently to the prophets and seers. Clements [1980a: 238] suggests that the addition of this phrase was made by a later redactor who made the original rebuke against the leaders into a rebuke against those Jews who do not pay attention to the message of the prophets. Vermeylen [1977: 404] attributes the addition

to Deuteronomic influence as in 9:14 and refers to Jer 23:9-40 for evidence of similar influence.

Auld [1983: 11] notes that the root חזה appears in technical prophetic contexts especially in Chronicles; texts where the root does not have this sense are found in Job, Psalms and Proverbs. In Ps 63:3 חזה and ראה are used of gazing on God in the sanctuary. In Ps 11:4; 17:2, it is used of what God sees. In Ps 11:7; 17:5, it is used of man seeing God and in Ps 46:9 of seeing God's actions. In Proverbs (22:29; 24:32; 29:20) the verb is used of observation and discernment. In Job, חזה is used of insight in 15:17 and 34:32. Prov 29:18 pairs חזון with תורה. In 30:10 the combination of ראים and חזים may denote those who offer wisdom and insight which the people reject in 30:9. There, not allowing the seers to "see" is equivalent to rejecting Yahweh's תורה.

### Verse 11

ספר: The noun occurs 8 times in First Isaiah: 29:11,12,18; 30:8; 34:4,16; 37:14; 39:1 and in Second Isaiah in 50:1. In 30:8 and 34:16 it suggests something definite that cannot be changed. Vermeeylen [1977: 406] translates the word as "letter", the meaning of the word in Dan 1:4; 1:17. Wildberger [1113] translates it as a "piece of writing", *Schriftstück*. In the context of chs 28-33, often preoccupied with the rejection of the רבר יהוה, it may be that the רבר are of more significance than the book.

קרא: The verb occurs some 65 times in Isaiah, generally with the meaning "to call". Isa 34:16 speaks of "reading from the book of the Lord" and so is the closest phrase to 29:11.

חתום: The word occurs only here and in 8:16. It is often used elsewhere in late texts with the same sense of sealing up a document (Neh 10:1;



Esth 3:12; 8:8,10; Jer 32:10,11,14; Dan.12:4,9). In other texts, it has the general sense of "seal up" (Lev 15:3; Deut 32:34; Cant 4:12; Job 9:7; 14:17; 24:16; 33:16; 37:7; Dan 9:24 and possibly Ez 28:12 although the word here is textually uncertain).

יָרַע סַפֵּר: The construction is similar to 1 Sam 16:16,18 where David is skilful in playing the lyre.

### Verse 13

אֲנִי: Although the word occurs often in Isaiah (1), only in 21:6 and 29:13 is it used to introduce a speech of Yahweh. Along with many Mss, Wildberger [1118] opts for יהוה.

עַן is found in Isa 3:16; 7:5; 8:6; 29:13; 30:12. In all cases the phrase עַן כִּי is used to introduce an accusation made by Yahweh. Gowan [172] has shown that when a sentence begins with עַן כִּי or עַן אֲשֶׁר it is always in a situation where God speaks to his prophet. עַן sections, he concludes, have their origins in the giving of oracles.

It is worth noting that the construction, apart from 3:16, is only found in Isaiah in the memorial of the prophet in 7:5 and 8:6 and within chs 28-33 in 29:13 and 30:12. The fact that the construction is attested elsewhere may, in the case of 30:12-13, lend support to the theory that 30:14 is not part of v12-14 but a separate addition.

נָשַׁן in the niphal occurs in Isaiah only in 29:13. The root is not found elsewhere in Isaiah but the qal occurs in 41:1,22; 45:21; 49:20; 50:8; 65:5. In other prophetic literature it occurs in two late texts, Jer 30:21 and

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1. Isa 3:17,18; 4:4; 6:1,8,11; 7:14,20; 8:7; 9:7,16; 10:12; 11:11; 21:6,8,16; 29:13; 30:20.

Amos 9:13. The niphal sometimes has the simple meaning "to draw near" (Deut 20:2; 25:1,9; 1 Sam 7:10; 2 Sam 11:20,21; Amos 9:13; Ez. 9:1) but often it denotes entering into the presence of someone important – the presence of Esau in Gen 33:7 and King Ahab in 1 Kgs 20:13 but particularly the presence of Yahweh as in Ex 19:22; 20:21; 24:2; 34:32; Deut 21:5; Jer 30:21. This is also the meaning associated with the verb in Isa 29:13.

הזה in Isa 28:11,14 refers to those who refuse to hear the word of Yahweh. Similarly in 29:13, the phrase may refer specifically to those blind and confused in v9f.

כברוני create a problem because it is in the plural as is יראתם. Both forms may be collective as Watts notes [385] to refer to "this people". Wildberger [1118] emends the word to כְּבִרְנִי to facilitate the singular possessive pronouns attached to "mouth" and "lips". כבר is used in the sense of "honouring" God. Elsewhere in Isaiah the verb with this sense is restricted to the Isaian Apocalypse (24:15; 25:3; 26:15) and Second Isaiah (43:20, 23; 58:13; 60:13; 66:5).

ותהו: BHS reads ותהו "their fear of me is in vain", adopting the LXX αὐτὴν δέ but Wildberger [1118] does not agree since this would leave יראתם in apposition to מצות אנשים which is unlikely and so retains the MT.

ירא: The root occurs in Isaiah often as a term of encouragement "do not fear", 7:25; 35:4; 40:9; 41:10,13; 43:1,5; 44:2; 54:4,14. It is used to express

the fear of the Lord, a theme common in the Psalms (1), in 8:12,13; 11:2,3; 29:13; 33:6 and in 50:10; 63:17. In 11:2,3; 33:6 the fear of the Lord is a wisdom attribute associated with other wisdom characteristics. In Isa 8:12,13 it would appear from the context that Israel's fear is misplaced. Isaiah is to fear not what the people fear but he is to fear Yahweh.

מצוה occurs in Isa 29:13 and the word צו in 28:10,13. What is unusual is that normally מצוה refers to the law of Yahweh in Psalms and in the Pentateuch but here it refers to the commandments of men.

לבו, שפתיו: In the Psalms the lips and heart are the members with which one worships Yahweh. One's lips should be without falsehood in Ps 17:1. They should praise Yahweh joyfully in Ps 63:6; 119:171. One does not alter the word that goes forth from one's lips in Ps 89:35. One praises God with a whole heart in Ps 9:2. The upright in heart are recommended in Ps 7:11. The broken hearted are mentioned in Ps 34:19 and the person with a pure heart shall approach Yahweh. In Deut 4:29; 6:5, one should seek God with one's whole heart.

אנשים occurs in Isa 2:11; 2:17; 7:13; 29:13. The position of man contrasts with the might of Yahweh, in a neutral sense in 7:13 but the inferiority of man in relation to God is emphasized in 2:11,17 and 29:13.

למר: In Isaiah the verb occurs in 1:17; 2:4; 26:9,10; 29:13,14; 40:14; 48:17.

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1. Ps 15:4; 22:24; 25:12; 61:6; 66:16; 76:9; 112:1; 115:11,13.

Elsewhere in the OT, it occurs most consistently in the Psalms (1). In Isa 1:17, the people are urged to learn what is good, namely correct social justice and behaviour. In 2:4, the day will come when nations will no longer learn war. In 26:9,10, righteousness is the object of the verb. In 29:13, the fear of the Lord consists merely of commands learned off by heart; but in 28:9,26, where the verb ירה is used, it is suggested that Yahweh wishes to teach his own plan and not the plans of men. Isa 29:24, where one truly understands what one learns, counteracts v13.

In 8:16 the disciples למרי are entrusted with the teaching of Isaiah. In 50:4, the servant has the tongue of those who have been taught. In 48:17; 54:13, it is Yahweh who teaches (hiphil) and in 40:14, the rhetorical question is asked "who can teach Yahweh?"

#### Verse 14

פלא: The root occurs in Isaiah in 9:5; 25:1; 28:29; 29:14. In all instances it is associated with the plan of God: in 9:5 פלא יועץ; in 25:1 פלא עצות; in 28:29 הפליא עצה. In 29:14a the plan of God is superior to the wisdom and understanding of the wise men.

The root פלא occurs most consistently in Psalms (34 times) where it refers to the wonderful works of God but not to the עצה of God. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, the root in Mic 7:15 and Joel 2:26 also refer to the wonderful deeds of the Lord and not his plan. Clements [1980a: 239] notes that the word is associated with God's great acts of deliverance (Josh 3:1; Ps 98:1) but now things are completely turned around - now God will act wondrously to destroy.

אבר: The word is found in Isa 26:14; 27:13; 29:14 and 41:11; 57:1 and

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1. 24 times of which 19 are in Ps 119.

60:12. In 26:14; 41:11 and 60:12 the enemies of Yahweh perish before him; the verb in 29:14 has the same significance where the wisdom of man perishes before Yahweh.

סתר occurs 5 times in Isaiah: 8:17; 16:3; 28:15; 29:14,15. In 29:14, the verb is parallel to אבר and therefore taken in the sense of destroy or put into the shade (in comparison to Yahweh's wisdom.)

חכמיו נבניו: The suffixes refer back to "this people" in v13. The wise men are the king's advisers according to Wildberger [1128]; he notes that the people in general are as guilty as the wisemen because they accepted their advice. Wisdom here is not a general comprehensive term but refers specifically to the politics with Assyria in 701 BC. However, in its present context, the people's lack of wisdom and understanding are contrasted with the excellence of Yahweh's wisdom in ch 28.

### Verse 15

The short woe oracle can be compared with those in 5:18f in both form and theme. Its isolated presence in 29:15 may be due to its similarity in theme with v13-14. V15 in its present position unifies and strengthens the collection of woes found throughout chs 28-33. In dealing with the theme of the futility of human wisdom, it anticipates the same theme in 30:1 and 31:1.

עמק: The verb is quite rare. The hiphil is found in Isa 7:11; 29:15; 30:33; 31:6. Isa 30:33 and 31:6 are both late. Elsewhere the verb is found in Ps 92:6; Jer 49:8,30; Hos.5:2; 9:9. Wildberger [1127] notes that this word is sometimes associated with Sheol as in Ps 69:3,15; 130:1; Isa 51:10; Ez 27:34. He associates the implicit reference to Sheol in v15 with the threat of death which lies behind the woe oracle. He understands שח as

the darkness of Sheol. Their deeds are among the dead.

In Ps 64:6f the doers of evil *פְּעֻלֵּי-עֵינָן* ask "who can see us?" and in Ps 94:7 the evil doers say that God does not see and that he does not perceive; this is similar to Isa 29:15b.

*מַעֲשֵׂה* occurs often in First and Second Isaiah (1). It occurs often as part of the phrase "the work of one's hands", referring either to Yahweh as in 5:12; 29:23; 60:21; 64:7 or to idols, the work of man's hands, as in 17:8; 37:19. Elsewhere it is often Yahweh's work that is referred to - 5:19; 10:12; 28:21; 29:15-16. In the latter text, the deeds of man are contrasted with the work of Yahweh.

### Verse 16

*הַפִּכְכָּם*: This is a noun with a pronominal suffix meaning "your perversity". 1QIsa reads *הִפֵּךְ מִכֶּם* "he overturns from you" while LXX omits the word. Wildberger [1129] suggests reading the word as a vocative and points to a parallel meaning in Ez 16:34. If the root is taken as *הִפֵּךְ*, this is the only instance where the verb is found in Isaiah.

In the image of the potter (2), there are two key words *יָצַר* and *חֹמֶר*.

*חֹמֶר*: The noun occurs in the OT most often in Job (3) and in Isaiah in 10:6; 29:16; 41:25; 45:9; 64:7 (4). In Job, clay usually has the connotation of humiliation or of one's lowly position e.g. 4:19; 13:12 (the word has a similar connotation in Isa 10:6). Sometimes it is emphasized that it is

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1. Isa 2:8; 5:12,19; 10:12; 17:8; 19:14,15; 26:12; 28:21; 29:15,16,23; 32:17; 37:19.
  2. Wildberger [1129-30] gives examples showing how the image of the deity as craftsman was current in Assyria and especially in Egypt.
  3. Job 4:19; 10:9; 13:12; 27:16; 30:19; 33:6; 38:14
  4. Elsewhere it occurs in Ex 1:14; Neh 3:14; Jer 18:4,6.

out of clay that God has made man (Job 10:9 and 33:6). In Isaiah, with the exception of 10:6, **כִּנֹּךְ** occurs as part of the image of the potter (29:16; 41:25; 45:9; 64:7). The word is also found in Jer 18:4-6 in the image of the potter.

**יָצַר** occurs in First Isaiah in 22:11; 27:11; 29:16; 30:14 and frequently in Second Isaiah (1) and in the Psalms (2). In Second Isaiah Yahweh is most often the subject of the verb. He is Creator: 43:1,7,21; 44:2,21,24; 45:7,9,11,18; 46:11; 49:5; 64:8. In First Isaiah he is the subject of the verb in 22:11; 27:11 and elsewhere in Jer 1:5; 10:16 (=51:19); 33:2; Amos 4:13; 7:1; Zech 12:1 but especially in the Psalms (33:15; 74:17; 94:9,20; 95:5; 104:26; 139:16). The verb is found in the context of the creation of idols in Isa 43:10; 44:9,10,12; Hab 2:18. Creation of idols is an activity diametrically opposed to Yahweh's act of creation.

**יָצַר** can be used as the technical term for a potter. This can be discerned from such texts as 2 Sam 17:28 and 1 Chron 4:23. It means potter in Ps 2:9; Isa 30:14; 41:25; Zech 11:13 and the reference to the potter is clear from other contexts in which the noun is used e.g. Isa 29:16. In the OT, the image of the potter and his vessel is found in Ps 2:9; Isa 29:16; 30:14; 41:25; 45:9; 64:8; Jer 18:1-2; 19:1,11. A slight distinction can be made between the uses of the image although sometimes this distinction is blurred. In Isa 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer 18:1-12, an analogy is drawn between Yahweh and the potter and between the people and the clay; while in Ps 2:9; Isa 30:13; 41:25; Jer

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1. Isa 41:25; 43:1,7,10,21; 44:2,9,10,12,21,24; 45:7,9,11,18; 46:11; 49:5; 54:17; 64:7. Elsewhere in prophetic literature it is found in Jer 1:5; 10:16 (=51:19); 18:2,3,4,6,11; 19:1,11; 33:2; Amos 4:13; 7:1; Hab 2:18; Zech 11:13; 12:1.
  2. Ps 2:9; 33:15; 74:17; 94:9,20; 95:5; 104:26; 139:16. It also occurs in Gen 2:8,19; 2 Kgs 19:25; 2 Sam 17:28; 1 Chron. 4:23.

11:1,11, the shattering of the vessel suggests the complete destruction of the people. The image is never a positive one and always carries with it some degree of threat.

Jer 18:1-12 and 19:1,11 may be the key to understanding the provenance of the image. In ch 18, the potter's vessel is held up as a threat; the people follow their own plans and act according to the stubbornness of their evil hearts (v12). In ch 19, the vessel is smashed, signifying utter destruction because the people have stiffened their necks and refused to hear the words of Yahweh (v15). The image used in v1 and v11 acts as an *inclusio* in ch 19, enclosing the reason for their forthcoming destruction.

Isa 29:16 and 30:14 are the only instances in First Isaiah where the image occurs. Isa 30:14 has a context similar to Jer chs 18-19. The children are rebellious (see 30:1 סוררים) and in Jer 18:12 each one acts according to the stubbornness of his own heart (סררו לב). In Isa 30:9 the people do not hear the instruction of Yahweh and in Jer 19:15 the people refuse to hear his word. In Isa 30:14, the image occurs in the second simile within the passage; this, together with the fact that the first word, שברה, is taken from the previous verse, may indicate that the second simile of the vessel is secondary.

Isa 29:16 picks up the pattern of the image found in Second Isaiah and in particular that of 45:9. The image in 45:9 is very apt in its own context but 29:16 adds nothing to v15 and may be an addition as Vermeylen suggests [1977: 405]. The image in v16 may have been introduced intentionally with 30:14 in mind or vice versa. The potential power of God is expressed in 29:16 and the image of the power is maintained and held in suspense until the second image in 30:14. Between the two images, in the present arrangement of material, a model of an idyllic age



is presented (29:17-24) brought about by understanding and accepting instruction (v24). But in 30:1-12, the model is rejected, the people instead choosing to be disobedient. Consequently destruction comes in 30:13-14, expressed by the image of the shattered vessel. The image is all the more powerful because it reinforces the potential threat anticipated in 29:14.

In 29:23, the phrase *מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי* may pick up *מַעֲשֵׂה* in 29:16; or the glossator who added *יִלְדָּיו* may have been familiar with the image of the potter in Second Isaiah e.g. in 64:7 where Yahweh is both a father and a potter and his children are the clay, the work of his hand *מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו*. Practically the same association of ideas is present in 45:9-10. The clay shouldn't say to the potter "What are you making?" One shouldn't say to a father "what are you begetting?" Therefore an awareness of the theme of the potter in Second Isaiah may help to throw light on the addition of *יִלְדָּיו* in 29:23. The image in 29:16 suggests the final irony in the sphere of the people's lack of understanding. That the thing that owes its very existence and survival to the person who created it should feel that he has no knowledge or expertise - this suggests the most complete form of blindness introduced in v9f.

### CONTEXT

V9 resumes the theme of drunkenness found in 28:1,3,8. Now its metaphorical sense is clear (*וְלֹא יִין, וְלֹא שִׁכָּר*). The instruction to throw into confusion and chaos is ironic and similar to the commission in 6:9-10 where the hiphil of *שָׁעַע* occurs. The original addressees in v9 may have been the wicked and evil of v5f; later the message was redirected towards the *חַזִּים* and *גִּבִּי'אִים*, words which are a later gloss made

under the influence of 28:7. The image of drunkenness is continued in v10 with the verb נסך, normally used of pouring a liquid. The spirit (רוח) of confusion contrasts with the spirit of Yahweh poured out upon the just in 28:6 and 32:15.

While the theme of hearing and refusing to hear runs through ch 28, it is the theme of seeing and the inability to see that occurs consistently in ch 29. The theme is introduced in 29:7 with the simile כחלום חזון לילה. It is continued with the occurrence of השתעשו ושעו in v9. In v10 Yahweh closes the eyes, thus causing blindness. The vision (חזון) in v11 is unable to be read or understood. In v13, although העם הזה speak with their mouth and lips what they have learned by heart, they are still unable to see. In v15, they ask "מי ראנו?" It is only in the general reversal of v17-24 where the sight of those who do not see is restored.

The theme of blindness and confusion unites separate pieces of material into a single unity. Those who attack Zion are confused and deceived by their visions and deeds (v7-8). The confusion of the wicked is continued by the imagery of drunkenness in v9-10. The security of what is learned by heart is a blind security which may be linked to the blindness of mere cultic observance in 29:1 in the phrase חגים ינקפו. Blindness and lack of clarity are compared to lack of wisdom and understanding in v14. As in 29:1-8, so too in v9-16, although the section is directed at the evil in the community, it holds up a veiled threat to the just also.

In ch 28, **הָעֵם הַזֶּה** in its immediate context refers to those who refuse to hear (v11). In ch 29, it refers to those unable to see because of their blindness (v13). V13-14 resume the theme of Yahweh as teacher, whose wisdom is superior to human wisdom. The futility of the plans of man, introduced briefly in the short woe oracle in v15, anticipates the same theme dealt with at greater length in 30:1-5; 31:1-3. The introduction of the image of the potter's vessel in 29:16 (it occurs only twice in First Isaiah) and the close relationship between both instances makes the shattering of the vessel in 30:14 all the more dramatic: 29:16 acts almost as a warning to the dire event of 30:14.

### Isaiah 29: 17-24

## INTRODUCTION

In Isa 29:17-24, the majority of commentators see two different sections, v17-21 and v22-24, the latter being a later addition. Although Procksch and Eichrodt find in the section a basic Isaianic core (1), Wildberger's position is more representative. He argues [1137-38] conclusively that the passage cannot come from Isaiah. His argument includes the following factors: v17f does not continue the political content of v15f; the poor and the meek are groups within later Judaism who believe in Yahweh and in Zion as in 14:32; the motif of the holiness of the Name is not used in a political perspective as Isaiah would have used it. That the deaf hear and the blind see is not credible

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1. Procksch [379] sees the core as v19,20,22,23a,24; Eichrodt [156] accepts v17-21 as authentic except that v17aα is a secondary redactional link.

in the teaching of the prophet who taught the opposite (6:9-10). He compares מעט מזער in v17 to מעט רגע in the late texts of 26:20 and Mal 3:1. Two close allusions to other secondary texts in Isaiah (29:17 with 32:15 and 29:23b with 8:13a) support the non-Isaianic nature of the passage. Finally the passage picks up words already used in chs 28-29 and has ties with Second Isaiah. He points to the eschatological concerns in the passage and links it closely to the Isaian apocalypse and dates it to the same period in the fifth century. Although v22-24 come from a time later than v17-21, it must be understood in the light of this passage. The purpose of the addition was to lend greater authority to v17-21 by incorporating a speech of Yahweh into the unit.

The position of Vermeylen [1977: 407-08] is exceptional. He takes v17-18,22-24 as the original nucleus and v19-21 which interrupt the flow as secondary. In the original unit, he argues that a polarization is established in Jewish society between Jacob (v22) on the one hand and the blind, deaf (v18) and those who err in spirit (v24) on the other. The author hopes for the conversion of the latter group. With the addition of v19-21, the conflict is sharpened; the wicked have no hope of redemption. Vermeylen associates the addition of v19-21 with Third Isaiah. Unlike Wildberger's analysis of the text, Vermeylen's division recognizes that v24 finds its place more naturally with v17-21 than with v22-23. Watts's point [389] that v24 acts as a conclusion to both v17-21 and 22-23 also recognizes the isolated position of the verse.

There is general agreement as to the identity of the groups in v17-24. Wildberger [1138] emphasizes the sharp distinction between the scoffer and ruthless and the poor and meek. Kaiser [1974: 278] finds 3 groups in the passage:

- (a) the scoffer and the ruthless.
- (b) the poor and meek.
- (c) those who lack a true understanding of scripture.

However, Vermeylen [1977: 408] points out that there is no evidence elsewhere in the OT of the third category.

Vermeylen [1977: 407] and Scott [327] emphasize the links between 29:17-24 with both chs 28-29 and chs 35,40-66. Vermeylen points out that v17-24 were written in the light of the preceding verses; v18 picks up the theme of refusing to listen in 28:12,14,23 and the theme of seeing in 29:9. The theme of darkness in v18b is already found in v13. ערץ is found in v5 and לך in 28:14,22; יקשון occurs in a different form in 28:13 and תעי-רוח picks up the same root found in 28:7. Scott links v17 to 35:2; 41:19; v18 to 35:5; 42:16,18; 43:8; v19 to 41:17; 51:1-3; v20-21 to 59:18; v24 to 48:17.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 17

הָלוֹא occurs 9 times in First Isaiah (1) and 14 times in Second Isaiah (2). Fohrer [1967a: 84] and Wildberger [1133] note that the interrogative particle denotes in 29:17 the idea of certainty. It normally expects an affirmative answer. Elsewhere in chs 28-33 it occurs in 28:25 where it also introduces imagery from nature. In Second Isaiah, the word is often used in a context which tries to elicit a response which acknowledges the work of Yahweh e.g. 40:21,28; 42:24; 43:19; 44:8,20; 45:21; 48:6. Coming after 29:9-16, where lack of wisdom and understanding play a central role, הָלוֹא introduces a change in tone. It may seek to elicit an

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1. Isa 8:19; 10:8,9,11; 28:25; 29:17; 36:7,12; 37:26.
  2. Isa 40:21,28; 42:24; 43:19; 44:8,20; 45:21; 48:6; 51:9,10; 57:4,11; 58:6,7.

answer from those who have shown themselves blind and without wisdom in v9-16.

It is difficult to ascertain the audience the author has in mind in v17 or whether v17 is simply a rhetorical question. Within chs 28-33, the literary technique of the question is rare. Apart from 28:25 and 29:17, and הַכֹּל-הַיּוֹם in 28:24, the only other questions are introduced by either מִי (28:9; 29:15) or אִיה (33:18).

מַעַט מוֹעֵד: The word מַעַט occurs often in the OT where it indicates a short period of time (1). The phrase עוֹר מַעַט occurs in Ex 17:4; Ps 37:10; Isa 29:17; Hos 1:4. More interesting is the word מוֹעֵד; it occurs in the OT only in Isaiah (10:25; 16:14; 29:17). The phrase מַעַט מוֹעֵד in 16:14 does not express time but refers to the remnant. The only other text where the phrase denotes a time element is 10:25 where Yahweh will destroy Assyria shortly, while in 29:17, he will destroy the scoffer and ruthless swiftly.

שׁוּב: Within First Isaiah, the verb normally occurs in one of two contexts: in the motif of the outstretched hand of Yahweh in 1:25; 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:4; 14:27 (2) or to express the attitude of repentance in 1:27; 6:10; 9:12; 19:22; 31:6. Elsewhere in Isaiah, the verb has the literal meaning "to return" (3). In 29:17, however, the verb does not fall into any of these categories; it is parallel to חָשַׁב and its meaning here, as Wildberger suggests [1133], must be determined from the context and

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1. Gen 47:9; Ex 17:4; Lev 25:52; Judg 4:19; Job 10:20; Ps 37:10; Isa 10:25; 26:20; 29:17; Jer 51:33; Hos 1:4; 8:10; Hag 2:6.
  2. Sheppard [1985: 196] notes that in 12:1, the verb in the phrase שׁוּב אֶפְרַיִם deliberately picks up the same verb used in the motif of the outstretched hand.
  3. Isa 1:26; 6:13; 10:22; 21:12; 23:17.

translated as "change" rather than "return".

לבנון: The noun is found with the article (1) and without it (2). In all texts, Lebanon is associated with trees especially in the phrase "cedars of Lebanon" found in 2:13; 14:8. Nielsen [126-28] in a survey of the word notes that it occurs over 70 times in the OT. Over a third are purely geographical indications (e.g. Deut 1:7; Josh 1:4; 11:17) or used in the context of a description of the cedars as building material (e.g. 1 Kgs 5:23f). The remaining two thirds reveal a figurative use (e.g. Judg 9:15) or are used as examples of an idyllic place (Isa 33:9). A picture of a fertile and beautiful place emerges: the glory of the new time is described in terms of Lebanon's glory (Isa 35:2; 60:13) and imminent disaster is described in terms of Lebanon withering (Isa 33:9; Nah 1:4). Lebanon is the epitome of fertility, beauty, greatness and power.

כרמל: The noun occurs 9 times in First Isaiah: 4 times in 32:15-16 and twice in the similar context of 29:17. Elsewhere it occurs in 10:18 where an opposite process takes place - the fruitful field and forest of Assyria are to be destroyed. In 16:8 similar destructive action takes place in the fruitful fields of Heshbon. In 33:9 the stripping of Carmel is a result of the wrath of Yahweh as in Amos 1:2; Nah 1:4. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, the fruitful field becomes a desert in Jer 4:26 and Mic 7:14.

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1. Isa 2:13; 10:34; 35:2; 60:13.

2. Isa 14:8; 29:17; 33:9; 37:24; 40:16.

יֵעָר: The noun occurs frequently in First Isaiah (1). It occurs with כַּרְמֵל in 10:18; 29:17; 32:15; 37:24; Mic 7:14. It is sometimes associated with the wicked as in the addition of 32:19 and particularly in the phrase סַבְבֵי-יֵעָר in 9:17 and 10:19. In 29:17 and 32:15, however, the fruitfulness of the forest is a blessing from Yahweh.

The fact that the verb חָשַׁב in chs 28-33 occurs only in 29:16,17; 32:15 and 33:8 further underlines the similarity between 29:17 and 32:15.

### Verse 18

בְּיוֹם הַהוּא: V18 is the second instance in chs 28-33 which describes what will happen on that day, the first being in 28:5.

חֲרָשִׁים: The verb חָרַשׁ occurs some 50 times in the OT, most consistently in the Psalms (2). The noun חֲרָשׁ is more rare: apart from some isolated instances where the noun has a literal sense (3), it occurs only in Isa 29:18 and in 35:5; 42:18,19 and 43:8 where it has a figurative sense. This points to a connection between 29:18 and Second Isaiah.

The רַבְרִי-סֵפֶר, sealed in v11, can now be read.

מֵאֵפֶל וּמִחֹשֶׁךְ: Wildberger [1134] and Kaiser [1974: 277] suggest that the מ is a *privativum* and that the phrase means "without gloom and darkness".

אֵפֶל in prophetic literature occurs only in Isa 29:18. Elsewhere it is

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1. Isa 7:2; 9:17; 10:18; 19:34; 21:13; 22:8; 29:17; 32:15,19; 37:24.
  2. Ps 28:1; 32:3; 35:22; 38:14; 39:13; 50:3,21; 83:2; 109:1.
  3. Ex 4:11; Lev 19:14 Ps 38:14; 58:5.



found in Job and Psalms (1). The noun אַפֶּלָה occurs in Isaiah in 8:22; 29:18; 58:10; 59:9. In prophetic literature it occurs twice as part of the Day of Yahweh imagery in Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:15 and is found with חֹשֶׁךְ. The noun in Jer 2:31 is used in a similar sense to Ex 10:22. In Jer 23:12, the way of the false prophets is compared to slippery paths in the darkness (2).

חֹשֶׁךְ occurs 5 times in First Isaiah and 10 times in Second Isaiah (3).

מַחֲשֵׁךְ occurs in 29:15 and 42:16. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, the noun חֹשֶׁךְ occurs 7 times (4). It is used as part of the Day of Yahweh imagery in Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18,20; Zeph 1:15. In Mic 3:6f, the fate of the false prophets is described in terms of darkness.

Both אַפֶּלָה and חֹשֶׁךְ in 29:18 have more in common with wisdom than prophetic literature. In the OT, חֹשֶׁךְ is found most frequently in the Book of Job (23 times), in the Psalms (13 times) and in Second Isaiah (10 times).

Some patterns of the word within the Book of Job emerge: darkness is associated with the way of the evil and wicked (5); light and darkness symbolize good and evil (6). In two texts, 5:13-14 and 12:22-25, lack of understanding is compared to darkness. In Isa 29:18, the darkness from which the deaf emerge may also be the darkness of lack of understanding, given the context of v9-12. In Job 12:25, lack of

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1. Job 3:6; 10:22; 23:17; 28:3; 30:26; Ps 11:2; 91:6. Of the five times it is found in Job, it occurs 4 times with the noun חֹשֶׁךְ.
  2. Elsewhere the word occurs in Deut 28:29; Josh 24:7; Prov 4:19; 7:9.
  3. First Isaiah: 5:20,31; 8:22; 9:1; 29:18; Second Isaiah: 42:7; 45:3,7,19; 47:5; 49:9; 50:10; 58:10; 59:9; 60:2.
  4. Ez 32:8; Amos 5:18,20; Mic 3:6; 7:8; Nah 1:8; Zeph 1:15.
  5. Job 15:22,23,30; 17:12; 18:18; 30:26; 34:22; 37:19.
  6. Job 17:12; 18:18; 30:26.

understanding is compared to the staggering of a drunk man. This simile is found in Isa 19:14 (see also 28:7; 29:9) and conveys the same idea.

In the Psalms, patterns similar to the Book of Job emerge: in Ps 35:6, darkness is associated with evil. In Ps 107:10, the people are in darkness and gloom because they have rebelled against Yahweh and spurned the counsel of the Most High. In Ps 18:29 and 112:4, light and darkness symbolize good and evil. In Ps 82:5, lack of knowledge and understanding are compared to darkness (1).

In Second Isaiah there is an emphasis on light and the dispelling of darkness: in 42:7, the eyes of the blind will be opened and those who sit in the darkness of prison will be brought out. The theme of releasing prisoners from darkness occurs also in 49:9. In 45:7,19; 50:10; 60:2, darkness is associated with evil but looking after the hungry and afflicted dispels the darkness. In 59:9, because justice and righteousness are lacking, the people grope around in the darkness as if they had no eyes.

In First Isaiah, the theme of חֹשֶׁךְ, אֵפֶל resembles the use of the word in Job and Psalms. In 5:20, good and evil are symbolized by light and darkness. In this, the verse resembles Job 17:12; 18:18; 30:26; Ps 18:29; 112:4. Isa 8:22 expresses a similar theme and 9:1 may pick up the theme from 8:22-23. In 29:18, the gloom and darkness may refer to lack of understanding and coherence expressed earlier in the chapter.

עֵינַי: Apart from 29:18, the noun occurs in Isaiah only in 35:5 and in Second Isaiah in 42:7,16,18,19; 43:8; 56:10; 59:10. In Second Isaiah, blindness (and deafness) has a figurative sense. In 42:19-20 and 43:8, the people have eyes and ears, yet they are still blind and deaf. In 42:7,

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1. In Qoh 2:13-14, wisdom and folly are compared to light and darkness.

Yahweh wishes to open the eyes of the blind and in 42:16, he will lead the blind in a way they do not know. In 56:10, the watchers are blind because they have no knowledge and in 56:10, without justice and righteousness one is blind. A similar theme is found in 35:5 where the opening of the eyes of the blind is one of the elements expressing a reversal of fortunes when Yahweh saves his people. Isa 29:18 presents the same type of reversal as those contexts where the word עֵינַי is used in Second Isaiah.

Elsewhere in the OT (1), the noun עֵינַי has a literal meaning (2). This is also true of the verb (3). Attention may be drawn to three texts: Ps 146:8 is very similar to Isa 42:7 where Yahweh opens the eyes of the blind. In the other two texts, Ex 23:8 and Deut 16:19, blindness is associated with a lack of justice. In Ex 23:8, a bribe blinds the officials and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. The vocabulary of Ex 23:6-8 is similar to Isa 29:21 and 32:7 (see שֶׁקֶר in Isa 32:7). In 29:18-20, when the blind see, injustice is no more. In 32:3-8, when the eyes of those who see are opened, injustice will not be tolerated. In Isa 56:10-12 and 59:9-10 blindness and lack of knowledge lead to social injustice. Deut 16:19 puts the case of Ex 23:8 more forcefully: since a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise, the officials are to seek justice and only justice, צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדָּף.

### Verse 19

עֵינַי occurs 12 times in First Isaiah and 4 times in Second Isaiah. No

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1. Ex 4:11; Lev 19:14; 21:18; Deut 15:21; 27:18; 28:28,29; 2 Sam 5:6,8; Job 29:15; Ps 146:8; Jer 31:8; Mal 1:8; Zeph 1:17.
  2. Clements [1980a: 241] in 29:18 takes the terms blind and deaf literally; at the same time, however, he remarks that the theme has its basis in 6:9-10.
  3. Ex 23:8; Deut 16:19; 2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 39:7.

pattern as to how the word is used emerges but at the start of v19 it may continue the process of reversal present in v17-18. It may also allude to the promise made by Yahweh in v14.

עניים occurs in First Isaiah in 3:14,15; 10:2; 11:4; 14:32; 26:6; 29:19; 32:7. In 3:15, Yahweh accuses the elders and princes of grinding the face of the poor. In 10:2, the writers of oppression are accused of robbing the poor of their right. Yahweh, on the other hand, defends the poor, through the king in 11:2 and through the security of Zion in 14:32. The poor rejoice in Yahweh in 29:19.

אביוני-ארם: The noun אביון occurs in Isa 14:30; 25:4; 29:19; 41:17. In all cases, Yahweh is their protection. On the other hand, ארם (12 times in First Isaiah) occurs in contexts which describe the unworthiness and lowliness of man (2:9,11,17; 5:15; 17:7; 31:3,8). Clements [1980a: 241-42] distinguishes between the עניים who were the afflicted pious community of Israel and the אביונים who were the economically poor and whose only hope is Yahweh. Wildberger [1140] thinks that such a distinction is an oversimplification. He sees both groups as the preservers of traditional beliefs in whose midst the eschatological hopes expressed in v17-24 will be fulfilled: it is from their circles that v17-21 emanates.

שמחה: Forms from the root שמח occur frequently in First and Second Isaiah (1). The root occurs often in the Psalms and is associated in

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1. First Isaiah: 9:2,16; 14:8,29; 16:10; 22:13; 24:7,11; 25:9; 29:19; 30:29; 35:10; 39:2. Second Isaiah: 51:3,11; 56:7; 61:7; 65:13; 66:5,10.

particular with Yahweh (1) or Zion (2). In Proverbs rejoicing is associated with the righteous (3).

In Isaiah the word refers to the joy of the harvest in 9:2; 16:10. In 22:13; 24:7,11 the joy is of a spurious kind but it is associated with Yahweh in 25:9; 29:19 and with Zion in 30:29; 35:10; 51:3,11; 56:7,10. In 29:19, as in Ps 34:3, it is the עֲנוּיִם who rejoice in Yahweh.

גיל: With the exception of 35:1,2, the verb occurs parallel to שמח (9:2; 16:10; 25:9; 29:19). It occurs frequently in Second Isaiah (4), sometimes associated with Yahweh, 41:16 (5) and 49:13, or with Zion, 65:18,19.

קרש ישראל (6): The word קרש occurs 14 times in First Isaiah (7) and 13 times in Second Isaiah. (8). In First Isaiah, the Holy One is forsaken, despised or rejected (9). The recognition of Yahweh as the Holy One involves a conscious turning towards him (10). In Second Isaiah, titles such as saviour, king, redeemer are in apposition to the Holy One (11).

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1. Ps 4:8; 5:12; 9:3; 21:2,7; 30:12; 31:8; 32:11; 33:21; 35:27; 40:17; 43:4; 45:9; 63:12; 64:11; 67:5; 68:4; 69:33; 70:5; 85:7; 86:4; 90:15; 92:5; 96:11; 97:11,12.
  2. Ps 48:12; 66:6; 90:14; 97:8; 122:1; 137:6.
  3. Prov 10:28; 12:20; 13:9; 21:15; 23:24; 29:2,6.
  4. Isa 41:16; 49:13; 65:18,19; 66:10.
  5. Laberge [1978: 33] draws attention to the close parallel between 29:19 and 41:16 which was perceived by the translators of the LXX.
  6. The phrase is absent in the LXX of v19. Procksch [379] and Wildberger [1134] omit ביהוה and בקרש ישראל as a pious gloss. Wildberger notes that the latter phrase is used in v19 with the same nuance as in Second Isaiah - Yahweh is the Holy One in whom Israel rejoices.
  7. Isa 1:4; 5:19,24; 10:17,20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19,23; 30:11,12,15; 31:1; 37:23.
  8. Isa 41:14,16,20; 43:3,14,15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 55:5; 60:9,14.
  9. Isa 1:4; 5:19,24; 10:17; 30:11,12; 31:1; 37:23.
  10. Isa 10:20; 17:7,8; 29:23-24; 30:15 which alludes to the rejection of the Holy One in v11.
  11. Isa 41:14; 43:3,14,15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 9:7.

Verse 20

אָפּט: The verb occurs 5 times in the OT, in Gen 47:15-16; Ps 77:9; Isa 16:4; 29:20. The noun is found in Isa 5:8; 34:12 and often in Second Isaiah (1) where it refers to the ability of Yahweh to defeat his opponents or to create out of nothingness.

לֵץ, עָרִיץ: Within chs 28-33, the noun עָרִיץ occurs only in 29:5,20. The adjective לֵץ occurs once in prophetic literature, 15 times in Proverbs (2) and in Ps 1:1. Both words in 29:20 may have been picked up from preceding verses: לֵץ from לָצוֹן in 28:14 and לוֹץ in 28:22; עָרִיץ from 29:9. This may explain why they only occur parallel to each other in v20 in the whole of the OT. In their immediate context the words refer to those who oppress the meek and the poor (v19) and those who obstruct the course of justice (v21).

שָׁקַד: The root occurs once in Isaiah in v20 and 10 times in the rest of the OT (3), usually with the literal sense of "watching over" or "waiting for" as in Ezra 8:29; Job 21:32; Ps 102:8; Jer 5:6. In Prov 8:34, the wiseman waits patiently for wisdom. Sometimes it is Yahweh who watches as in Ps 127:1 and Jer 1:12 where the root forms a pun on the word for an almond. In Jer 31:28, Yahweh watches not to break down but to build up and in Jer 44:27 he watches for evil and not for good. The phrase כָּל-שָׁקֵדִי-אֵין does not occur elsewhere in the OT. It denotes those who wait patiently for an opportunity to do evil.

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1. Isa 40:17; 41:12,29; 45:6,14; 46:9; 47:8-10; 52:4; 54:15.

2. Isa 1:22; 3:34; 9:7,8,12; 13:1; 14:6; 15:12; 19:25,29; 20:1; 22:10; 24:9.

3. Ezra 8:29; Job 21:32; Ps 102:8; 127:1; Prov 8:34; Jer 1:12; 5:6; 31:28; 44:27; Dan 9:14.

יָנֹן occurs 5 times in First Isaiah (1) and 7 times in Second Isaiah. (2). The evil decrees of 10:1 and the plans of the watchers of evil in 29:20 result in social injustice in 10:2 and 29:21. Both texts are similar to 32:6b. In 31:2, it is a sign of Yahweh's wisdom that he rises up against the פְּעֻלֵי-יָנֹן. The noun in First Isaiah has the same significance as it has in Job (11 times), Psalms (27 times) and Proverbs (8 times) where those who do evil are bitterly opposed to the righteous. Isa 59:4,7 where the noun occurs 3 times is almost identical to Ps 7:5.

### Verse 21

חָטָא: The verb occurs twice in First Isaiah in the participle form in 1:4 and 29:21 but the noun form is common in both First and Second Isaiah (3). With the exception of 29:21 (and possibly 59:12) the sin usually involves Yahweh and not exclusively human relationships as in 29:21. Within chs 28-33, the significance of the word in 29:21 is more similar to 33:14 than to 30:1.

The רָבָר of the wicked contrasts with the emphasis on the authority of the רָבָר-יְהוָה throughout these chapters.

יָכַח in the niphal occurs in Isa 1:18; 2:4; 11:3,4; 29:21; in 1:18; 2:4 It is an activity associated with Yahweh and in 11:1,3, with his anointed on behalf of the עֲנוּיִם. The phrase in which the verb occurs in 29:21 is similar to Amos 5:10 which refers to one who reproves at the gate. The

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1. Isa 1:13; 10:1; 29:20; 31:2; 32:6.
  2. Isa 41:29; 55:7; 58:9; 59:4,6,7; 66:3.
  3. Isa 1:18,28; 3:9; 5:18; 6:7; 27:9; 30:1; 31:7; 33:14; 43:24,25; 53:12; 58:1; 59:12.

activity of the wicked in 29:21 is opposed to the activity of Yahweh in 28:6.

יִקְשׁוּן: The root קִשׁ is a hapax and so קִשׁ' is suggested as the root by Wildberger [1134]. The verb is found 3 times in Isaiah in 8:15; 28:13; 29:21 and nowhere else in prophetic literature except in Jer 50:24. The verb refers to being ensnared by evil in Deut 7:25; Ps 124:7; 141:9; Qoh 9:12; but the wicked are in turn ensnared by Yahweh, Isa 8:15; 28:13; Jer 50:24 or by the work of their own hands in Ps 9:17.

נָטָה: The verb occurs 14 times in First Isaiah (1) and 10 times in Second Isaiah (2). In First Isaiah the verb is used to describe the outstretched hand of Yahweh in 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:4; 14:26,27; 23:11; 31:3. Isa 29:21 is most similar to 10:2; in the former those who turn aside the righteous are condemned and in the latter, those who turn aside the needy from justice are condemned.

תְּהוֹ occurs in First Isaiah in 24:10; 29:21; 34:11. In the OT it occurs most consistently in Second Isaiah where it is used to describe the nations (40:17,23) or idols (41:29; 44:9). In First Isaiah, the word occurs in contexts similar to Second Isaiah. In 24:10; 34:11, it denotes chaos as in 45:18,19. The juridical context of 59:4 where those who enter suit "rely on empty pleas" resembles 29:18. Wildberger [1134] translates the word in v21 as "empty arguments".

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1. Isa 3:16; 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:2,4; 14:26,27; 23:11; 29:21; 30:11; 31:3; 34:11.
  2. Isa 40:22; 42:5; 44:13,20,24; 45:12; 51:13; 54:2; 55:3; 66:12.



Verse 22

Although v22a presents no difficulty textually, the clause belonging to  $\text{וְעַל}$  seems to be somewhat misplaced. LXX translates: "upon the house of Jacob whom he selected from Abraham". Wildberger [1135] attaches little weight to this translation on the grounds that  $\text{בֵּית}$  does not mean  $\alpha\phi\omicron\rho\iota\omega$  and  $\text{וְעַל}$  does not mean  $\epsilon\lambda$ . It is not the house of Jacob that has ransomed Abraham but Yahweh. Even if  $\text{לְ}$  (to) is read as  $\text{לֵא}$  (God), the sentence still remains somewhat ambiguous. Procksch [379] omits the entire relative clause because the redemption of Abraham presupposes his slavery and this is not mentioned in Genesis. Wildberger [1135], followed by Clements [1980a: 242] finally opt for the reading  $\text{לֵא}$  because this involves the least tampering with the text.

The word of Yahweh is introduced by  $\text{לֵא}$  in 1:24; 10:24; 28:16; 29:22; 30:12. Wildberger [1143] notes that the word in Isaiah normally leads from a statement of condemnation to a statement of judgment (29:14) but in v22, it is simply used to continue the thoughts of v17-21.

$\text{בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל}$  occurs most often in the book of Isaiah where it occurs 12 times in First Isaiah and 25 times in Second Isaiah. The phrase  $\text{בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל}$  occurs in 2:5,6; 8:17; 10:20; 14:1; 29:22. Wildberger [1143] sees the phrase as a synonym for the community of Israel.

$\text{בֵּית}$  occurs in 1:27; 29:22; 35:10 and 51:11.

$\text{אֲבֹרָהֶם}$  occurs in 29:22 and 3 times in Second Isaiah, 41:8; 51:2; 63:16. Elsewhere in prophetic literature Abraham features in Jer 33:26; Ez 33:24; Mic 7:20. It would appear that in these texts, the purpose of the reference to Abraham is to recall Yahweh's salvation in the past and this

may be the purpose behind the phrase in 29:22. Wildberger [1143] associates the verb with the Deuteronomic Exodus tradition (Deut 13:6; 15:15); the redemption of Abraham prefigures the redemption of Israel. Clements [1980a: 242] detects an awakened interest in Abraham in the post-exilic age. Kaiser [1974: 280] notes that in a time of slavery and suffering, Abraham was a reminder of Yahweh's salvation. Skinner [238] connects the reference to Abraham to the Book of Jubilees ch 20, to a late Jewish legend about Abraham's deliverance from a fiery death prepared for him by his pagan captors.

בּוֹשׁ occurs 9 times in First Isaiah (1) and 10 times in Second Isaiah (2). In First Isaiah, 29:22 is the only instance where the verb is not associated with destruction and annihilation. It has similarities with the use of the verb in Second Isaiah where those who put their trust in Yahweh shall not be put to shame, 45:17; 49:23; 50:7; 54:4. Within chs 28-33, the verb occurs in 29:23 and 30:3,5. The introduction of the word in 29:23 anticipates the theme that true help is to be sought in Yahweh and not in Egypt. Those who put their trust in Egypt are put to shame (30:3,5) while those who acknowledge Yahweh (29:23b) are not put to shame (29:22).

חור is a hapax. The noun חור appears in the same verse as בּוֹשׁ in 19:9 but not as a parallel as in 29:22. Syriac reads *nhprn* suggesting יִחַפְּרוּ in Hebrew. Wildberger [1135] retains the root חור and associates it with an Aramaic-Syriac root meaning "to be white".

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1. Isa 1:29; 19:9; 20:5; 23:4; 24:23; 26:11; 29:22; 30:3,5.
  2. Isa 41:11; 42:17; 44:11; 45:16,17,24; 49:23; 50:7; 54:4.

Verse 23

יִלְרִי: The word is probably an addition, perhaps in the light of Abraham in v22. The word also occurs in 2:6 and 8:18 along with the phrase בֵּית יַעֲקֹב but no particular significance can be attached to these texts. Clements [1980a: 242] translates the phrase as "when his children see". Wildberger [1144] notes that the work of his hands is not the children of Jacob but the work of Yahweh in history. יִלְרִי in v23 is a later gloss reflecting an attempt to explain the phrase מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו.

קָרַשׁ: The root occurs in First Isaiah 5:16; 8:13; 13:3; 29:23; 30:29 and in Second Isaiah in 65:5; 66:17. The closest text to 29:23 is 8:13.

שֵׁם: The noun refers to the name of Yahweh 8 times in First Isaiah (1) and 18 times in Second Isaiah (2).

The name of Yahweh is an everlasting name, 26:8; 55:13; 63:12. It is often used as a synonym for Yahweh, 18:7; 42:8; 47:4; 48:2; 51:15; 63:19. It is associated with judgment in 30:27; 48:9; 59:19; 64:1. The phrase "to call upon the name of Yahweh" occurs in 12:4; 41:25; 50:10; 65:1. His name is given praise or shown respect in 24:15; 25:1; 26:13; 29:23; 56:6; 63:14.

The closest text to 29:23 is 57:15 where the phrase קְרוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ occurs.

אֱלֹהֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל: The phrase occurs in Isa 17:6; 21:10,17; 24:15; 29:23 and in Second Isaiah in 41:17; 45:3,15; 48:1,2; 52:12. A parallel phrase similar to קְרוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל occurs in 2:3; 21:10,17; 41:17; 45:3,15; 48:2; 52:12. The name

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1. Isa 12:4; 18:7; 24:15; 25:1; 26:8,13; 29:23; 30:27.

2. Isa 41:25; 42:8; 43:7; 47:4; 48:2,9; 50:10; 51:15; 55:13; 56:6; 57:15; 59:19; 60:9; 63:12,14,19; 64:1; 65:1.

of Yahweh is associated with the phrase in 24:15 and 48:2.

עָרַץ: The root occurs as an infinitive construct in Isa 2:19,21; 47:12 and in the hiphil in 8:12,13 and 29:23. Elsewhere it is found in Deut 1:29; 7:21; 20:3; 31:6; Josh 1:9; Job 13:25 31:34; Ps 10:18; 89:8.

In Deuteronomy and Joshua, it is always used as part of the formula "Do not be in fear or dread for Yahweh is with you." It always refers to the fear inspired by the enemy.

However in Ps 89:8 and in Isaiah, it is the fear inspired by Yahweh that is in question. In Ps 89:8, Yahweh is feared in the council of his holy ones. In Isa 2:19,21, Yahweh rises to terrify the earth. In Isa 8:12-13, he tells the people that they should be in fear and dread of him and of no-one else. In Isa 29:23, the house of Jacob shall stand in terror before him. Procksch [379] rejects v23b on the grounds that it is a simple repetition of 8:13. Wildberger [1135] agrees with him: the change from the first person singular שֶׁמִי in v23a to the third person קָרוֹשׁ in v23b shows that it does not come from the author of v22-24. The author of v23a did not intend the same interpretation as v23b. V23a can be read along the lines of Num 20:12 where Yahweh is sanctified by his wonderful deeds.

A pun may be intended on the verb עָרַץ in v23 and the noun עָרִץ in v20. The power and might are transferred from the scoffer to Yahweh and the people formally recognize this in v23.

Verse 24

רוֹגְגִים: The root occurs in the qal in Isa 29:24. It occurs in the niph'al in Prov 18:8 (=26:22) and 26:20. Other forms appear in Deut 1:27; Ps 16:28; Prov 106:25.

רוֹגְגִים in Deut 1:27 and Ps 106:25 are quite similar. Both speak about those who murmur in tents: in Deut 1:27, it is within the context of rebelling against the command of Yahweh and in Ps 106:25 in the context of not obeying his voice. In Proverbs, RSV translates the word as "whisperer" since it is used of one who spreads rumours.

In prophetic literature, the word is found only in Isa 29:24. Wildberger [1145] sees the whole verse referring to the desert wanderings of Israel.

לָקַח occurs in prophetic literature only in Isa 29:24. It is found in Deut 32:2; Job 11:4 and 5 times in Proverbs, 1:5; 4:2; 7:21; 9:9; 16:21.

In Deut 32:2, לָקַח is parallel to אָמַר in the last words of Moses. In Job 11:4, it refers to a speech in a wisdom context. At the start of Proverbs (1:5), it is stated that one of the purposes of the book is that the wise man will advance in wisdom: the same phrase is found in a similar context in Prov 4:2. In Prov 4:2, לָקַח is parallel to תּוֹרָה while in 16:21, it is parallel to נִבּוֹן. One text in Proverbs stands out from the rest - in Prov 7:21, the word is used to convey the flattery and seductive speech of the harlot. Scott [328] suggests that the phrase לָמַד לָקַח in Isa 29:24 means to accept instruction at the hands of the priests as in Ez 36:23; Hag 2:11-12; Zech 14:20-21.

לָמַד: In 29:13 the commandment of men is what the people learn. In v24 they learn the true instruction of Yahweh. The verb in v24 reverses the theme of refusing to hear what Yahweh teaches (יָרָה) in 28:8. Jensen [1981: 177] comments that the passage from present wrong

dispositions to future right ones can be conceived of as an instructional, pedagogical process.

תעה: Wildberger [1145] notes that Isaiah uses the verbs to express the actions of drunkards (28:7) and for those who lead the people astray (3:12; 9:15). It is also used in Ps 107:4 and of the desert wanderings in Ps 119:110,175. In Isa 29:24, Wildberger concludes that the verb resumes the tradition of the murmuring during the desert wanderings.

## CONTEXT

V17-24 offer a denouement to the tensions of v1-16. The image of the fruitfulness of nature resumes the theme of 28:23-29 and reverses the negative and barren imagery of the dust and chaff of 29:4-5. The same image is repeated in 32:15 and 35:2, thus encouraging the efforts of the just with tantalizing promises; but Lebanon and Carmel wither and fade away in the times of evil described in 33:9 (see also 10:18).

V18 reverses the situation of v9-12. It resembles Second Isaiah both in vocabulary (מאפל ומחשר, חרשים) and theme (42:7,18,19; 43:8; 49:9). V19-22 promise reward to the meek and poor but punishment to the ruthless, scoffer and those who wait to do evil. The scoffer of v5 comes to an end in v20. The activity of the wicked in v21 clashes with the attributes of Yahweh: they cause man to sin with their word (ברבר) whereas Yahweh's word brings rest (28:12); they obstruct the one who judges at the gate (מוכח בשער) whereas Yahweh is a spirit of justice to those who sit in judgment (ליושב על המשפט) in 28:6.

V24 resolves the tensions of v13-14. It also continues the theme of

Yahweh as instructor and teacher in 28:9,26,29. V22-23 may provide a look ahead to ch 30 rather than a retrospective glance at ch 29. They introduce the theme of the holiness of Yahweh and the motif of shame (בוש): those who put their trust in Yahweh are not put to shame (29:22) whereas those who put their trust in Egypt are (30:3,5). The theme of the power and might of Yahweh introduced in v23 contrasts with the helplessness of Egypt in 30:1-5. Wildberger [1145] notes that the verbs רגן and תעה in v24 are used of the desert wanderings in Deut 1:27; Ps 106:25 (רגן) and in Ps 119:110,175 (תעה). The idea of movement and wandering in v24 which is satisfied and finds rest in the understanding (בינה) and instruction (לקח) of Yahweh contrasts with the restlessness and journeying of those in 30:1-7 who seek security in Egypt and not in Yahweh. Finally the hiphil of the root ערץ in 29:23 ironically describes the attitude of the just - the noun ערץ is used throughout chs 28-33 to describe the wicked.

**Chapter 4**

**ISAIAH 30**



## Chapter 4

ISAIAH 30Isaiah 30: 1-5

## INTRODUCTION

There is general consensus that 30:1-5 contains a woe oracle which can be attributed to Isaiah. It concerns an attempt on the part of Judah to initiate an alliance with Egypt against Assyria. While Wildberger [1150] dates the oracle to the period of the Ashdodite rebellion, 713-711, the majority of scholars including Childs [1967: 33], Kaiser [1974: 283], Vermeylen [1977: 409] and Clements [1980a: 243] suggest the years 705-701 as more likely considering the general context of chs 28-33 in which the oracle occurs.

Form critically, Childs [1967: 33] argues that the oracle falls into the familiar pattern of invective-threat. The woe designates the addressee and presents the grounds for the polemic. The threat begins in v3 followed by a concessive clause. Sufficient parallels of this type are available, Childs goes on, within the threat to prevent one supposing a new beginning in v3, e.g. Isa 31:2; Jer 4:30; 11:11; 22:24; Hos 8:10.

Kaiser [1974: 286] and Vermeylen [1977: 410] propose that v3 is an addition. It does not follow the rhythm of the discourse: it borrows most of its material from v2b and v5 and it introduces too quickly the reproach section of the oracle. In addition one might add that the two key words *כלמה* and *בשת* are words that are more typical of Second Isaiah.

Isa 30:1-5b is cleverly constructed: in particular, the way in which a very effective opposition is set up and maintained between Egypt and Yahweh by a series of significant and evocative words and phrases placed

in parallel which contribute to the irony of the section:

- V1b Egypt (לנסך מכבה לעשות עצה) is opposed to Yahweh (לא רוחי לא מני).
- V2a Egypt (ההלכים לרדת מצרים) is opposed to Yahweh (פי לא שאלו).
- V2b The terms לעז במעוז לחסות בצל normally applied to Yahweh now refer to Egypt.
- V3 The words מעוז and חסות בצל, applied to Egypt become meaningless and are replaced by בשת and כלמה, words normally applied to idols.
- V5a The phrase לא יעיל, normally applied to false gods, applied now to Egypt, suggests that Egypt is seen as an idol of the Judeans - something opposed to Yahweh.
- V5b A build up of words is used to portray the ineffectiveness of Egypt: לא לעזר לא להועל are parallel to לבשת לחרפה.

Much of the vocabulary of 30:1-5 is more commonly found in Second Isaiah. Where the words do occur in First Isaiah, the verse in which they are found is late. This is true especially of 30:3 and may indicate that the provenance of this verse is Second Isaianic:

סורר	1:23; 30:1; 65:2.
מסכה	30:1,22.
חטאת	3:9 6;7; 30:1; 41:2; 43:24,25; 44:22; 58:1; 59:2.
שאל	7:11,12; 30:2; 41:28; 45:11; 58:2; 65:1.
עז	12:2; 26:1; 30:2; 45:24; 51:9; 62:8.
פרעה	19:11; 30:2,3; 36:6.
חסה	14:32; 30:2; 57:13.
בשת	30:3,5; 42:17; 54:4; 61:7.
כלם	41:11; 45:16; 50:6; 61:7.
כלמה	30:3; 45:16; 50:6; 61:7.
יעל	30:5,6; 44:9,10; 47:12; 48:17; 57:12.
חרפה	4:1; 25:8; 30:5; 47:3; 51:7; 54:4.

The possibility that in 30:1-5 there is an intentional reference to idols must be kept in mind. However, the oracle, with its strict parallelisms, presents a clear message: refuge and help only come from Yahweh – to look for such refuge in Egypt is futile.

The only grounds for supposing that reference is made to idols are found in the vocabulary:

(v5) לא להועיל (v3) כלמה בשת, (v1) לנסך מסכה.

With regard to לנסך מסכה it is not certain that מסכה has its normal meaning here in that the noun probably owes its presence to the verb and does not have the meaning "idol" in the technical sense. Although בשת, כלמה are often associated with idols, this is not always the case and they often simply denote the plight of the enemies of Zion or those who have been refused his help (Ps 35:4; 40:15; 69:7; 70:3; 74:21).

In v5a, לא יועיל simply refers to a people that cannot profit them – the verb often has this literal meaning (Job 15:3; 21:15; 30:13; Jer 12:13). Some commentators, for example Wildberger [1149], feel that the phrase is an addition resulting from a change in the end of the line. If it is an addition, then it may pick up the verb from v5a.

The original oracle probably comprised 30:1,2,4,5. Vermeylen [1977: 410] argues too strongly that v3 was inserted by a post-exilic circle of pious Jews who wished to interpret the oracle in the context of an anti-idolatry tradition. It is more likely that v3 is simply an addition inserted to make the point of the oracle even more forceful: it highlights the opposition between Yahweh and Egypt; because the plan of the people is not of Yahweh and not of his spirit לא רוחי, לא מני, they will be ashamed and confounded (v3). If there is an intentional reference to idols, then the purpose is to compare Egypt to an idol to

which the Judeans turn rather than to Yahweh. This same distinction is highlighted in 31:3: **אֵל, בָּשָׂר וְלֹא רוּחַ** - Egypt is not Yahweh; in the same way that an idol, although attractive as a substitute, is not Yahweh. Its power is futile compared to his power; those who trust in it will be put to shame and confounded (v3) - by implication those who turn to Yahweh will not be put to shame, a point that is made explicitly in Isa 45:16-17.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 1

**בָּנִים סוֹדְרִים**: The participle **סוֹדֵר** meaning "rebellious" occurs in Deut 21:18,20; Neh 9:29; Ps 66:7; 68:7,19; 78:8; Prov 7:11; Isa 1:23; 30:1; 65:2; Jer 5:23; 6:28; Lam 3:11; Hos 4:16; 9:15; Zech 7:11. It appears with the participle **סוֹדֵר** in Deut 21:18,20; Ps 78:8; Jer 5:23; 6:28 but never in Isaiah. In Isa 30:9, however, the same Judeans are described as **עַם מָרִי** **בָּנִים כַּחֲשִׁים**. The adjective is only used of the Jewish people and never of foreign nations. Deut 21:18,20 deals with the rebellious son who does not obey the voice of his father and mother, a text which could be used as a paradigm of Yahweh's relationship with Israel.

Judah is called "rebellious sons" in Isa 30:1; the people are rebellious in Isa 65:2; "this people" are rebellious in Jer 5:23; and "my people" are rebellious in Jer 6:28. The princes of Judah are rebellious in Isa 1:23 and the princes of Ephraim in Hos 9:15; Israel is called "a rebellious heifer" in Hos 4:6. In Ps 78:8, the post-exilic community are reminded that their forefathers were a rebellious generation.

The verb **פָּשַׁע** is used of the sons who are rebellious in the introduction to the book of Isaiah in 1:2. In 2 late texts, Neh 9:29; Zech 7:11, the rebelliousness of the people is presented in terms of refusing to hear Yahweh's word and to obey his law. In Isa 30:1, the proof of

their rebellion is more specific: they seek Egypt's help and not Yahweh's.

In the Psalms, those who are rebellious are not the people in general but rather a small group within the community. In Ps 68:7, Yahweh looks after the fatherless, the widows, the desolate, the prisoners but rejects those who are rebellious. In 66:7, the Psalmist is amazed how the rebellious, faced with the mighty works of Yahweh, can exult and boast.

נאם-יהוה: The phrase occurs most often in Jeremiah. It is the phrase נאם ארני יהוה that occurs frequently in Ezekiel. In Isaiah the phrase נאם יהוה occurs 15 times, especially in Second Isaiah (1) but variations of the phrase occur elsewhere:

1:24; 19:4:	נאם הארץ יהוה צבאות
3:15:	נאם ארני יהוה צבאות
14:22; 17:3; 22:25:	נאם יהוה צבאות
17:6;	נאם יהוה אלהי-ישראל
56:8:	נאם ארני יהוה

The phrase occurs in Isaiah in both a threatening and salvific context. The wording נאם יהוה appears almost always in a context favourable to Judah (2). The exception is 30:1 where the phrase introduces a woe oracle. Variations of the phrase often introduce a threat (3). Within chs 28-33, the phrase occurs only in 30:1 and 31:9. While 30:1 opens with Yahweh uttering a threat, 31:9 closes with Yahweh offering

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1. Isa 14:22; 30:1; 31:9; 37:34; 41:14; 43:10,12; 49:18; 52:5; 54:17; 55:8; 59:20; 66:2,17,22.
  2. Isa 14:22; 31:9; 37:34; 41:14; 43:10,12; 49:18; 52:5; 54:17; 55:8; 59:20; 66:2,17,22.
  3. Isa 1:24; 3:15; 17:3,6; 22:25; 19:4.

his support for Zion. The phrase in these two verses may act as an *inclusio*: perhaps 31:9 is intended to show how the wrath of Yahweh has been turned away from Judah towards the Assyrians. In keeping with the theme of reversal throughout these chapters, the word of Yahweh spoken against Judah (30:1) (1), is turned against the Assyrians (31:9).

עצה: The woe oracle of 30:1 develops that of 29:15 in that it resumes the theme of the עצה.

לא רוח, לא מני are similar to לא אל, לא רוח in 31:1.

מסכה generally refers to images, gods or the molten calf (2). Isa 25:7 and 30:1 are the only exceptions to this. In 25:7 the phrase המסכה refers to a covering or veil. In 30:1 the strict parallel would suggest that the phrase לעשות עצה is synonymous with the phrase לנסך. The problem is that it would be the only text where the root denotes such a meaning. Watts [392], following BDB [650-51], states that the root נסך is used in Isa 48:5 in the sense of pouring a libation. He therefore suggests that the phrase נסך מסכה has four possible meanings:

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1. Yahweh utters the oracle in 30:1-5 but it is the prophet who delivers it in 31:1-3.
  2. Ex 32:4,8; 34:17; Lev 19:4; Num 35:52; Deut 9:12,16; 27:15; Judg 17:3,4; 18:14,17,18; 1 Kgs 14:9; 2 Kgs 17:16; 2 Chron 28:2; 34:3,4; Neh 9:29; Ps 106:19; Isa 30:22; Hos 13:2; Nah 1:14; Hab 2:18.

- |     |                          |                    |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------|
| (a) | to pour a libation       | (Isa 48:5)         |
| (b) | to cast a molten image   | (Isa 30:22; 42:17) |
| (c) | to weave a web           | (Isa 25:7)         |
| (d) | to negotiate an alliance | (Isa 30:1)         |

Dahood [1969: 57-58] suggests that the word עצה means "wood" or "wooden idols". Following him, Irwin [71] translates the line:

"making a wooden idol without my consent  
and casting a molten image without my spirit."

However, the normal meaning of עשה עצה is to execute a plan, e.g. 2 Sam 17:23; Isa 25:1. Therefore it is best to follow Wildberger [1147-48] that in the case of 30:1, the fact that the two phrases are parallel must determine its significance and therefore לנסך מסכה should be translated "to negotiate an alliance". The LXX reads it in the same way with συνθηκας. This, of course, does not rule out the possibility of the phrase having a more literal meaning such as "to pour a libation" since such an action may well have formed part of the formal signing of an agreement.

נאמן occurs in Isa 3:9; 6:7; 30:1; 40:2; 43:24,25; 44:22; 58:1; 59:2. Wildberger [1152] points out that the verb נאמן can denote a wrong doing in the political sense as in 2 Kgs 18:14. In Isa 30 where the Judeans make an alliance with Egypt they commit such a sin. The actions of the rebellious sons in 30:1 and those of the ruthless and scoffer are described by the same root נאמן so that in the present arrangement of the text, the similar attitude of both groups exists side by side.

## Verse 2

הִלֵּךְ: The participle in the singular occurs in Isa 30:29; 33:15; 35:8; 52:12;

57:2. In the plural it occurs in Isa 8:6; 9:1; 30:2; 42:5; 65:2. The participle can denote good moral behaviour: in 33:15, "he who walks uprightly" is blessed: in 57:2 "those who walk in righteousness rest in peace". It also occurs in positive contexts e.g. 8:6 where the "waters of Shiloah that go gently" are contrasted with Rezin and the son of Remaliah. In 52:12, it is promised that Yahweh "walks before you". But it can also denote bad moral behaviour; in 9:1, the people have walked in darkness; in 35:8, the wicked shall not go in the Highway of the Lord. In 65:2, the rebellious walk in a way that is not good.

Within chs 28-33, the verb הֵלֵךְ occurs in 28:2,21,29; 33:21. In ch 30, a development can be seen; in 30:2 the rebellious people go down to Egypt for help; in 30:21, the people hear a word "this is the way, walk in it"; in 30:29, the people have gladness of heart as when "one sets out to go to the mountain of the Lord":

30:2:	ההלכים לרדת מצרים
30:29:	כהלך . . לבוא בהר-יהוה

By 30:29, a reversal has taken place; at the beginning of the chapter, the rebellious go to Egypt but at the end the faithful go to Zion. Egypt represents everything that is false and Zion represents the presence of Yahweh.

יָרָר: Apart from the possible presence of the verb in 32:9 (if בָּרַר is emended to יָרָר), יָרָר occurs in chs 28-33 only in 30:2 and 31:1,4. The action of Yahweh coming down to fight for Mt Zion in 31:4 and offering his help is contrasted with the actions of the Judeans who go down to Egypt in search of help which is futile.



מצרים occurs very frequently in First Isaiah especially in ch 19 (1). It is mentioned in 7:18 as an instrument of Yahweh. In 10:24,26; 11:15,16, it occurs in a recall of the Exodus experience. In the oracle against Egypt in ch 19, the foolishness and lack of wisdom of the Egyptian princes are emphasized. Often the futility of seeking the help of Egypt occurs. In 30:2,3,7; 31:1,3; 36:6,9, it is those who seek her help who are condemned. Implicit in the condemnation is the accusation that one should have looked to Yahweh for help and not to Egypt.

פה is very common in Isaiah (2). The noun sometimes refers to Yahweh (1:20; 30:2; 34:16) particularly in Second Isaiah (40:5; 45:23; 48:3; 55:11; 58:14) where it generally occurs as part of the phrase כי פי יהוה דבר.

שאל: The verb occurs in First Isaiah only in 7:11,12 and 30:2. In 7:11,12, Ahaz refuses to seek a sign from Yahweh. In Second Isaiah the verb occurs more frequently (41:28; 45:11; 58:2; 65:1). In 58:2 and 65:1, it concerns seeking Yahweh and his judgments. Kaiser [1974: 285] comments that the verb is the ancient technical term for seeking an oracle from Yahweh e.g. in the theme of holy war, Josh 9:14; Judg 1:1; 20:18,23,26; 1 Sam 13:41; 23:9f. The same phrase את-פי לא שאלו is found in Josh 9:14 and Isa 30:2. But Wildberger [1153] rightly notes that it does not have this technical meaning here; rather the phrase should be seen against לא רוחי, לא מני, i.e. they have not taken note of Yahweh's plan expressed through Isaiah. Therefore it denotes a more general

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1. Isa 7:18; 10:24,26; 11:11,15,16; 19:1,2,3,4,12,13,14,16,18,19,20,21,22,23, 24,25; 20:3,4,5; 23:5; 27:12,13; 30:3,7; 31:1,3; 36:6,9.
  2. Isa 1:20; 5:14; 6:7; 9:11,16; 10:14; 11:4; 19:7; 29:13; 30:2; 34:16; 40:5; 45:23; 48:3; 49:2; 51:16; 52:15; 53:7,9; 55:11; 57:4; 58:14; 59:21; 62:2.

attitude towards Yahweh rather than asking for advice on one specific occasion. Finally, a similarity exists with the phrase found in Isa 31:1 ואת-יהוה לא דרשו.

לעז: Sometimes, the form is taken as the infinitive construct of the root עז. The root occurs in the OT as follows: the infinitive construct in Isa 30:1; the hiphil in Isa 10:31; the imperative in Ex 9:19; Jer 4:6; 6:1. It means "to flee for safety".

If the form comes from the root עז meaning "to help", then the root is found in Isa 5:21; 12:2; 26:1; 30:2; 45:24; 51:9; 52:1; 62:8. In the Psalms the verb appears approximately 45 times where it is associated with the help that comes from Yahweh. In Isaiah, the word is always associated with Yahweh (1). Isa 30:2 is the exception but by implication it may be assumed that the help that only comes from Yahweh is mistakenly sought in the Pharaoh.

מִצְדָּה: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 23:4,11; 25:4; 30:2,3. It means literally "fortress" or "stronghold" (2). More often, however, it is used metaphorically: in Nah 3:11, a stronghold from the enemy is sought. In Isa 30:2,3, a stronghold from the enemy is sought in Egypt; but more commonly, a stronghold is found in Yahweh (3). This is particularly true in the Psalms (Ps 27:1; 31:3,5; 37:39; 43:2; 52:9) where Yahweh is a stronghold and refuge for the afflicted. Viewed against this background, seeking a stronghold in Pharaoh in Isa 30:2 and not in Yahweh seems all the more futile.

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1. In 26:1, it refers to the "strong city" but the rest of v1 makes it clear that it is from Yahweh that the city gets its strength.
  2. Judg 6:26; Isa 23:4,11; Ez 24:25; 30:15; Dan 11:1,7,10,19,31,38,39.
  3. 2 Sam 22:33; Neh 8:10; Prov 10:29; Isa 25:4; Jer 16:19; Joel 4:16; Nah 1:7.

פֶּרַע occurs only 4 times in Isaiah, 19:11; 30:2,3; 36:6, but elsewhere in prophetic literature, 10 times in Jeremiah (1) and 12 times in Ezekiel (2). He often stands as representative of Egypt and his power is always seen as futile, worthless and doomed to destruction. This is true also of his counsellors (Isa 19:11), his stronghold (Isa 30:3), his might (Isa 36:6); in Jeremiah this is true of his army (Jer 37:5,7,11) and his palace (Jer 43:9). Some Pharaohs are mentioned by name, Hophna in Jer 44:30 and Neco in Jer 46:2. Suitably, the last mention of the Pharaoh ends with a lament in Ez 32:2,31,32. It is worth noting that the word occurs predominantly in late texts in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In Isaiah, most commentators agree [see Clements 1980a: 166-67] that 19:11f is unlikely to come from Isaiah. This then would leave 30:2,3 as the only instance where the word Pharaoh occurs in an authentic Isaian oracle. In 30:2, it occurs as a parallel to Egypt and no particular significance can be attached it.

נָסוּ: The verb is found in prophetic literature in Isa 14:32; 30:2; 57:13; Nah 1:7; Zeph 3:12. It occurs with the noun מָעוֹן in Ps 31:2-3; 37:39-40; Isa 30:2-3; Nah 1:7. It can mean literally "to take refuge" as in Judg 9:15, but it is used almost always to denote taking refuge in Yahweh. This is mainly true of the Psalms where the word occurs 25 times (3) but occasionally elsewhere too (4). In Isa 14:32, the afflicted take refuge in Zion but ultimately in Yahweh. In 57:2, they take refuge in Yahweh.

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1. Jer 25:19; 37:5,7,11; 43:9; 44:30; 46:2,17,25; 47:1.
  2. Ez 17:17; 29:2,3; 30:21,22,24,25; 31:2,18; 32:2,31,32.
  3. Ps 2:12; 5:12; 7:2; 11:1; 16:1; 17:7; 18:3,31; 25:20; 31:2,20; 34:9,23; 36:8; 37:40; 57:2; 61:5; 64:11; 71:1; 91:4; 118:8,9; 141:8; 144:2.
  4. 2 Sam 22:3,31; Ruth 2:12; Prov 30:5; Nah 1:7; Zeph 3:12. In Deut 32:37, the people take refuge in false gods and not in Yahweh.

So with this background in mind, that one should seek shelter in Egypt and not in Yahweh is a striking use of the verb to show that such shelter is futile. Finally in Isa 28:15,17, the nouns *מחסה*, *מעון*, occur together where Egypt is the false shelter to which Judah turns.

*צל*: The noun is most often found as part of a simile where it denotes the fleeting and futile quality of life (1). In the Psalms it is an image applied to Yahweh (17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 63:8; 91:1; 121:5). In Isaiah, too, the word is often associated with Yahweh as in 4:6; 24:4-5; 49:2; 51:16 and probably 32:2. In contrast is the futile shelter offered by Egypt in 30:2-3 (2). To sum up: the words *לעון*, *מעון*, *חסה*, *צל*, normally applied to Yahweh, become ironic when applied to Egypt.

### Verse 3

*נשת* occurs most often in Isaiah (3), Jeremiah (4) and the Psalms (5). Elsewhere it occurs across a range of writings (6). It is often associated with the worship of false idols and the futility that results from such an action (Isa 42:17; Jer 2:26; 7:19; 11:13; Hos 9:10).

In Isaiah, apart from 30:3,5, the noun occurs only in Second Isaiah. Within its present context, it offers an effective contrast to 29:22; those who put their trust in Yahweh will not be put to shame - unlike those who put their trust in Egypt.

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1. 1 Chron 29:15; Job 14:2; 17:7; Ps 102:12; 144:4; Qoh 6:12; 8:13.
  2. The shadow which Isaiah lengthens in 2 Kgs 20:10 (Isa 38:8) is one of the few phenomena associated with the prophet in Sirach's historical review in Sir 48:23.
  3. Isa 30:3,5; 42:17; 54:4; 61:7.
  4. Jer 2:26; 3:24,25; 7:19; 11:13.
  5. Ps 35:26; 44:16; 69:20; 70:4; 109:29; 132:18.
  6. 1 Sam 20:30; 2 Chron 32:21; Ezra 9:7; Job 8:22; Dan 9:7,8; Hos 9:10; Mic 1:11; Hab 2:10; Zeph 3:5,19.

Vermeeylen [1977: 409-10] argues that the addition of **לֹא לְהוֹעִיל** in v5b shows that the passage was later understood in the sense of condemnation of idols. He sees the verb in the context of the anti-idolatry tradition of the Second Temple period especially in Hab 2:18-19 where the hiphil of **עָל** is found with the words **עֵץ, מַסַּכָּה**, which mean, in the context, statues of metal and wood. The addition of **לֹא לְהוֹעִיל** reflects a cultic reading of the passage which, Vermeeylen argues, comes from the same author as v3.

**כָּלֵם**: The main occurrences of the verb are in Isaiah (1), Jeremiah (2), Ezekiel (3) and Psalms (4). It is found often with the verb **בּוֹשׁ** (5). In general, those whom Yahweh helps are neither put to shame nor confounded. In Isa 41:11, it is those incensed against Israel who are confounded. In 45:16, it is those who trust in idols who are put to shame while in the following verse, 45:17, it is stated that those who trust in Yahweh will not be put to shame. In 50:7, when Yahweh helps, no one is put to shame. The Psalmist prays (69:7; 74:21) that Yahweh will not let him be put to shame, another way of asking for his help. He asks (35:4; 40:15; 70:3) that Yahweh will put his enemies to shame.

**כָּלָמָה**: The main occurrences of the noun are in Psalms (6), Jeremiah (7) and Ezekiel (8). In Isaiah, apart from 30:3, the noun occurs only in

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1. Isa 41:11; 45:16,17; 50:7; 54:4.
  2. Jer 3:3; 6:15; 8:12; 14:3; 22:22; 31:19,
  3. Ez 16:27,54,61; 36:32; 43:10,11.
  4. Ps 35:4; 40:15; 44:10; 69:7; 70:3; 74:21.
  5. Ps 40:15; Isa 41:11; 45:16,17; 54:4; Jer 14:3; 22:22; 31:19; Ez 36:32.
  6. Ps 4:3; 35:26; 44:16; 69:8; 71:13; 109:29.
  7. Jer 3:25; 20:11; 23:40; 51:51.
  8. Ez 16:52,54,63; 25:30; 32:24; 34:29; 36:7,8,15; 39:26; 44:13.

Second Isaiah in 45:16; 50:6; 61:7. It is found with בַּשָּׁת in Ps 35:26; 44:16; 69:20; Isa 30:3; 61:7; Jer 3:25.

Vermeylen [1977: 410] notes that כְּלִמָּה is not attested to in the prophetic writings of the eighth century and believes that the other instances of the word especially those in the Psalms come from post-exilic circles of pious Jews.

#### Verse 4

צֶעַן occurs in Num 13:22; Ps 78:12,43; Isa 19:11,13; 30:4; Ez 30:14. In Isaiah it is always associated with the word שָׂרִים.

שָׂרִים: The noun occurs 12 times in First Isaiah and 3 times in Second Isaiah (1). When the word refers to authorities within Judah, it has negative connotations (Isa 1:23; 3:3,4,14). In 19:13 and 30:4, the princes of Egypt are seen as futile and helpless. The princes of Assyria are first seen as haughty in 10:8 but later as cowards in 31:9. Isa 32:1 is the only text where the שָׂרִים appear without fault.

Elsewhere in prophetic literature, the noun is found with מֶלֶךְ (2), in the prose passages of Jeremiah, 4:9; 17:25; 36:21; 49:38; in Hos 3:4; 8:10; 13:10. In many of these texts, the authority of the king and his princes is portrayed as vulnerable and insecure. In Jer 17:25, however, kings and princes will once again sit on the throne of David if the people listen to Yahweh and observe the rules of the Sabbath.

מְלָאךְ: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 14:32; 18:2; 30:4; 33:7; 37:14,36; 42:19; 44:26; 63:9.

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1. Isa 1:23; 3:3,4,14; 10:8; 19:13; 21:5; 23:8; 30:4; 31:9; 32:1; 34:12; 43:28; 49:7,23.

2. For this reason in Isa 30:4, מְלָאכִים is sometimes read as מְלָכִים.

The word חנם is a hapax and the root נלל occurs only in 30:4 within chs 28-33. (1).

### Verse 5

כל הבאיש: Emerton [1981: 125-128] deals with the textual problem here which he sees as threefold: the words are too short metrically, there is doubt as to whether the root of the verb is ב'ש or ב'וש and כל is not normally used absolutely as the subject of a clause. He notes [126] that IQIsa reads ב'ש כלה which differs only from the MT in the division of the words. He explains כלה as כל with the third person masculine singular prenominal suffix written in an archaic way with the letter ה as the final *mater lectionis* and translates "Everyone will be ashamed".

להועיל, יועילו, hiphil forms from the root יעל, occur frequently in the OT (2). The basic meaning of the verb is "to be of profit" (3) but nearly always the word is associated with the lack of profit or ineffectiveness of idols (4) or deceptive words (Jer 7:8; 23:32). The verb only occurs in First Isaiah in 30:5,6; but in Second Isaiah it is more common where it always denotes the ineffectiveness of idols. It is not used elsewhere in Isaiah of "a people that cannot profit" as in 30:5.

עזר: The verb occurs in First Isaiah only in 30:7 and 31:3. The noun

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1. Elsewhere the qal occurs in Isa 6:7; 16:8; 52:11; 53:4; the hiphil in 5:8; 6:7; 8:8; 25:12; 26:5; 30:4.
  2. 1 Sam 12:21; Job 15:3; 21:15; 30:13; 35:3; Prov 10:2; 11:4; Isa 30:5,6; 44:9,10; 47:12; 48:17; 57:12. Jer 2:8,11; 7:8; 12:13; 16:19; 23:32. Hab 2:18.
  3. Job 15:3; 21:15; 30:13; 35:3; Prov 10:2; 11:4; Jer 12:13.
  4. 1 Sam 12:21; Isa 44:9,10; 47:12; 48:17; 57:12; Jer 2:8,11; 16:19; Hab 2:18.

עזר is found in 30:5 and the noun עזרה in 10:3; 20:6; 31:1,2. In Second Isaiah (1) the verb refers to the help of Yahweh e.g. 41:10,13,14; 44:2; 49:8; 50:7,9. This is also the case in the Psalms, e.g. 20:3; 33:20; 70:6; 115:10,11; 121:1,2; 124:8, where Yahweh is the source of help. Gonçalves [159] who has carried out an extensive investigation, notes that the verb is used 129 times in the OT. 66 instances, of which 39 are in the Psalms, concern the help which Yahweh gives to Israel as a people or individually. Where help comes from a foreign people, it is most often Egypt or foreign gods and the futility of such help is always stressed. In First Isaiah, the root of עזר follows the same pattern where it implies that the help of anyone other than Yahweh is inferior. This is particularly true of Egypt (20:6; 30:5,7; 31:1,2,3). In 10:3 when the punishment of Yahweh comes, no-one will be able to help.

חרפה: The main occurrences of this word are in Isaiah (2), Jeremiah (3) and the Psalms (4). It is in the same semantic range as כלמה, בושת. It occurs with בושת in Ps 44:14-16; 69:21; Isa 30:5; 54:4; and with כלמה in Ps 69:8; 74:22; Jer 31:19. In Isaiah, apart from 30:5, it is found either in late texts in First Isaiah (4:1; 25:8) or in Second Isaiah (47:3; 51:7; 54:4). The Psalmist prays that Yahweh might deliver him from his reproach and shame. In Jeremiah, Yahweh threatens to make Zedekiah and all in Jerusalem a reproach (24:9) and Bozrah in 49:3. He threatens to make a reproach of all those in Jerusalem not taken into exile in 29:18 and of the remnant who went down to Egypt in 42:18; 44:8,12 and of the false

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1. Isa 41:6,10,13,14; 44:2; 49:8; 50:7,9; 63:5.

2. Isa 4:1; 25:8; 30:5; 47:3; 51:7; 54:4.

3. Jer 6:10; 15:15; 20:8; 23:40; 24:9; 29:18; 31:19; 42:18; 44:8,12; 49:18; 51:51

4. Ps 22:7; 31:12; 39:7; 44:12; 69:8; 69:10,11,20,21; 71:13; 74:22; 78:66; 79:4,12; 89:42,51; 109:25; 119:22,39.



prophets in 23:40. The very word of Yahweh itself becomes a reproach in Jer 6:10; 20:8.

## CONTEXT

The woe section beginning in 30:1 is by far the longest within the series. It opens with the word סוררים which sets the tone for the chapter; the theme of rebellion is picked up with the phrase בנים נחשים in v9. The word עצה in 30:1 resumes the theme of the previous woe in 29:15. The grounds for the accusation of rebellion in 30:1-5 are that the people turn away from Yahweh and seek help in Egypt, a theme which resumes the condemnation found in 28:14-18. The identity of the סוררים is thinly veiled: they represent the evil who are opposed to the just. In Ps 68:7, Yahweh looks after the fatherless and the widows but rejects those who are rebellious. The same root חטא is used to describe the activity of the rebellious in 30:1 and the ruthless and scoffer in 29:21, and reflects their similar attitude. They do not seek Yahweh's word (ופי לא שאלו) and while the just take refuge in Yahweh (מעון, חסה, in the Psalms often denote Yahweh's protection of the just), the wicked seek refuge in Egypt. The futility of this course of action is mirrored in ch 19 which emphasizes the foolishness and lack of wisdom of the Egyptian princes. The outcome of seeking help in Egypt is described by the terms בלמה, בשת which may imply that Egypt is seen as an idol in that it offers a poor substitute for Yahweh.

In its present context, 30:1-5 looks back to 28:14-18 where the same irony is employed: words normally associated with Yahweh are applied to Egypt. 30:1-5 also anticipate the following woe section, 31:1-3, which shares the same vocabulary and theme. The theme of 30:1-5 is developed in the rest of ch 30 and presents a corollary to it: while the wicked go down to Egypt, the just go up to Zion (30:29).

## INTRODUCTION

It is generally agreed that the original oracle contained in 30:6-7 comes from Isaiah in the year 701 (Duhm [193], Kaiser [1974: 288], Clements [1980a: 244], Wildberger [1160]). It envisages the same situation as 30:1-5; its message is that the help of Egypt is useless and profitless - true help is to be sought in Yahweh. As Vermeylen points out [1977: 410], the phrase *לֹא יִעִלּוּ עִם* is an attempt by a later redactor to harmonize the two accounts. Gonçalves [150] makes the important point that Isaiah is not interested in Egypt for its own sake but only insofar as it touches upon the situation of Judah. He is not concerned with offering a political analysis about an alliance with Egypt; his interest is exclusively religious. His announcement that Egypt's help will fail is not a result of his political astuteness but rather his knowledge of the plan of Yahweh.

Vermeylen [1977: 410-11] and Gonçalves [147] include v8 as part of this section. Gonçalves sees the name *רָהַב* as highly symbolic and notes that v6-7 is similar to 8:1-4 and 20:1-6. He argues that in v8 it is the phrase *שָׁם שָׁבַת רָהַב* that Isaiah is instructed to write down. Vermeylen [1977: 411] disagrees with the majority of scholars (1), who take v8 with the following section, on the grounds that this makes the inscription impossibly long; the suffixes of *חָקָה*, *כָּתַבָּהּ* cannot refer to the words which follow but only those that precede. Fohrer's point [1967a: 96] that v8 refers to the attitude of Judah in general rather than to a specific incident helps to broaden the argument as to what the verse refers. The *כִּי* in v9 offers an explanation of the suffixes of *חָקָה*, *כָּתַבָּהּ* which are not referred to in their own verse - this would suggest that v8 is

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1. Duhm [194-5], Fohrer [1967a: 96], Childs [1967: 36], Kaiser [1974: 292], Barth [279], Clements [1980a: 246] and Wildberger [1169].

intended to be read with v9f.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 6

The title מִשָּׁנָה בְּהִמּוֹת נֹגַב introduces v6-7. מִשָּׁנָה in Isaiah introduces oracles concerned with the foreign nations, Babylon (13:1), Philistia (14:28), Moab (15:1), Damascus (17:1), Egypt (19:1), the wilderness of the sea (21:1), Dumah (21:11), Arabia (21:13), Valley of Vision (22:1), Tyre (23:1). The word also means "burden" as in 46:1,2, the only instance of the word in Second Isaiah and a meaning not entirely incongruous with the context of 30:6. The word is to be connected with מִשָּׁנָה in the same verse which comes from the same root.

בְּהִמּוֹת occurs in Isaiah in 18:6; 30:6; 46:1; 63:14. In 46:1 it is the idols which are being carried on the beasts. נֹגַב occurs in Isaiah only in 21:1 and 30:6.

צָרָה וְצוּקָה resumes the theme of oppression of 29:1-7 where the roots appear frequently.

לִבְיָא: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 5:29; 30:6 (1). It occurs quite often as part of a simile (2). In the majority of cases, it occurs parallel to אֲרִיָּה (3). In Hos 13:8 it is parallel to יְהוָה the referent being Yahweh. In many instances the word מִרְיָא appears in the context (4). It therefore occurs within the same semantic range as the vocabulary of 31:4.

לִבְיָא occurs twice in Isaiah - 5:29; 30:6. In 31:4, language is borrowed

1. Elsewhere in the OT it occurs in Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; 24:9; Deut 33:20; Job 4:11; 38:39; Ez 19:2; Hos 13:8; Joel 1:6; Nah 2:12.
2. Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; 24:9; Deut 33:20; Isa 5:29; Hos 13:8.
3. Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; 24:9; Ez 19:2; Joel 1:6; Nah 2:12.
4. Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; Deut 33:20; Job 4:11; 38:39; Isa 5:29; Ez 19:2; Nah 2:11.

from 5:29, a process which has the effect of turning the image around. It may be worth noting that while the parallel in 5:29 is **לביא, כפרים**, in 31:4 it is **אריה, כפיר**, an observation that may indirectly reveal connections between 5:29; 30:6; 31:4.

**ליש** occurs in Isa 30:6; Job 4:11 and Prov 30:30 (1). Only in Isa 30:6 and Job 4:11 are the two words **ליש** and **לביא** found parallel. In Job 4:10, **אריה** and **כפרים** are parallel as in Isa 31:4 and the same parallel exists in Isa 5:29; 11:6. Therefore like **לביא**, **ליש** is in the same semantic range as the vocabulary of 31:4.

There are other connections between Job 4:10-11 and Isa 31:4: the voice of the lion, **קול**, in Job 4:10 and their voice, **קולם**, in Isa 31:4, assuming that the possessive pronoun refers to the lion and its young. **טרף** forms part of the image of the lion in both Job 4:11 and Isa 31:4. In the context of Job 4:7-11, **אריה, כפרים, ליש, לביא** are identified as the evil ones (v8), those who plough iniquity, **חרש-און**, and sow trouble, **זרעי-עמל** (2). They are compared to the strong lion whom Yahweh is able to destroy. The comparison is similar to Isa 31:4, if the band of shepherds is identified as Yahweh prepared to rescue the prey, **טרף**, from the lion. In Job 4:11 the prey may refer to the innocent and upright (**נקי**, **ישרים** of v7).

**אפעה** occurs only in Isa 30:6; 59:5 and Job 20:16. In Job 20:16 and Isa 59:5, it is equated with wickedness and so its meaning is more metaphorical than literal.

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1. In Prov 30:30, the lion is the mightiest of the beasts **בהמה** - he does not turn back from anyone.
  2. In Isa 31:2, Yahweh rises against the evil doers, **פעלי-און**, and destroys them; **כלה** is used in Isa 31:3 and Job 4:9 of Yahweh destroying the evil doers.

שרף מעופף: The noun שרף occurs most often in Isaiah: 6:2; 6:6; 14:29; 30:6 (1). In the plural in 6:2,6, it is transliterated as the word "seraphim" (RSV). The phrase with the polel participle occurs only in 14:29 and 30:6; in both instances it is used to depict the swooping down of the enemy.

The verb עוף is particularly common in Isaiah (see 31:5). While in 30:6, the Judeans travel to Egypt for help through the land of the flying serpent, in 31:5, on the other hand, Yahweh comes to the help of Zion like flying birds.

Wiseman [110] notes that in Akkadian *appu* means "tip", "spur" and *uppu* means "prick", "goad". He suggests this may be the same as עוף in Hebrew so that שרף מעופף would denote "jab" or "prick": שרף מעופף in 30:6 would then mean "deadly poisonous snakes" and not "flying serpents".

כתף occurs in First Isaiah in 11:14; 30:6; and in Second Isaiah in 46:7; 49:22. Elsewhere in prophetic literature it occurs 16 times in Ezekiel and once in Zechariah (2). It is therefore only found in late prophetic literature: in First Isaiah 11:14 is late. The word occurs in a description of the boundaries of the land (3) or of the construction of the Temple (4). In Exodus where it occurs 11 times (5), it is used in the context of the cult of the "shoulder pads" to be worn. But the simple meaning "shoulder" is attested in Num 7:9; Neh 9:29; Job 31:22; Ez 12:6,7,12; 24:4; 29:7,18; 34:21; Zech 7:11 and it is this meaning that the word has when it occurs in Isaiah.

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1. Elsewhere in Num 21:6,8 and Deut 8:15 where it refers to the dangers encountered by the Israelites in the desert following the Exodus from Egypt.
  2. Ez 12:6,7,12; 24:4; 25:9; 29:7,18; 34:21; 40:18,40,41,44; 41:1,2; 46:19; 47:2; Zech 7:11.
  3. Num 34:11; Josh 15:8,10,11; 18:12,13,16,18,19; Ez 25:9.
  4. 1 Kgs 6:8; 7:30,34,39; Ez 40:18,40,41,44; 41:2; 46:19; 47:2.
  5. Ex 27:14,15; 28:7,12,25,27; 38:15; 39:4,7,18,20.

עִירִים occurs only in Isa 30:6,24 in prophetic literature (1). The function of the asses change within the chapter. Whereas in v6, they are employed to carry wealth out of the land to elicit the help of Egypt, in v24 their function as עֲבָרֵי-הָאָרֶמָּה symbolizes the prosperity and peace of the land when the inhabitants have turned to Yahweh.

עַל רַב־שָׁת גַּמְלִים: The vocabulary is rare. רַב־שָׁת is a hapax. גַּמְלִים is found in Isa 21:7; 30:6 and 60:6. Elsewhere in prophetic literature it is found only in Jer 49:29,32. Of its 52 occurrences in the OT, 24 are found in Genesis. In 21:7, גַּמְלִים is parallel to חֲמֹר. Isa 60:6 presents an opposite picture to 30:6; in the latter, wealth is carried from Jerusalem to Egypt but in 60:6, camels come laden with gold from Sheba to Jerusalem to honour the house of Yahweh.

חֵיל occurs in Isaiah in 5:22; 8:4; 10:14; 30:6; 36:2; 43:17; 60:5,11; 61:6. Apart from the instances where it denotes "strength" (5:22; 36:2; 43:17), it always refers to the wealth of the nations and not Judah (8:4; 10:14; 60:5,11; 61:6).

אֹצֵר, normally found in the singular, sometimes refers to the treasury of the king (2) but more often to the treasury of Yahweh in the Temple (3). In Isaiah, the noun occurs in 2:7; 30:6; 33:6; 39:2,4; 45:3. In 39:2,4, it refers to the treasury of Hezekiah. In 2:7, Yahweh rejects his people because the land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their

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1. Elsewhere it occurs in Gen 32:16; Judg 10:4; 12:14; Job 11:12; Zech 9:9.
  2. 1 Kgs 15:18; 2 Kgs 14:14; 16:8; 18:15; 24:13; 1 Chron 27:25; 2 Chron 12:9; 25:24; Jer 38:11
  3. Josh 6:19,24; 1 Kgs 7:51; 14:26; 15:18; 2 Kgs 12:19; 24:13; 1 Chron 26:20,22; 27:28; 28:12; 29:8; 2 Chron 5:1; 11:11; 16:2; Jer 50:25; Dan 1:2.

treasures. In 33:6, the fear of the Lord is a treasure; in 45:3, Yahweh promises to give Cyrus "the treasures of darkness." In 30:6, the treasures may refer to the wealth which has been taken out of the Temple - and so it would be ironic if the Temple, the pledge of Yahweh's presence, should be pillaged in order to secure help from a source that is both profitless and futile.

The repetition of the phrase **לֹא יוֹעִילֻ עַל-עַם לֹא יוֹעִילֻ** links v6-7 firmly to v1-5.

### Verse 7

**הַבֵּל** occurs in Isa 30:7; 57:13; it is more common in Jeremiah (1) where it always denotes the worthlessness of idols. It is particularly common in Qoheleth and Psalms (2) where it denotes the worthlessness of man's life because of its fleeting nature. It is also found in Proverbs 13:11; 21:6; 31:30. In Isa 57:13, it denotes the worthlessness of idols as it does in Jeremiah. In 30:7, perhaps there is the nuance that Egypt which has replaced Yahweh in the eyes of the Judeans, is as useless as an idol.

**רִיק**: Within chs 28-33, the word appears in 29:8; 30:7; 32:6. Like the word **הַבֵּל**, it has associations with wisdom literature. In the important addition of 29:8, it refers to the wicked; in 32:6 it also refers to the wicked; and so it may be that in 30:7 the editor of the section wishes to make the same association.

**רָהַב** occurs in Isaiah in 30:7 and 51:9; elsewhere in Ps 87:4; 89:11; Job 9:13; 26:12. With the exception of Ps 87:4, it is used in a context where Yahweh utterly destroys Rahab and in Ps 87:4, Egypt is called Rahab.

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1. Jer 2:5; 8:19; 10:3,8,15; 14:22; 16:19; 51:18.
  2. Qoh 1:2,14; 2:1,11,15,17,19,21,23,26; 3:19; 4:4,7,8,16; 5:6,9; 6:2,4,9,11,12; 7:6,15; 8:14; 9:9; 11:8,10; 12:8. Ps 2:5; 8:19; 10:3,8,15; 14:22; 16:19; 51:18.

הם שבת: If שבת is the infinitive construct, it is the only occurrence in First Isaiah but is found in Second Isaiah in 40:22; 44:13; 45:18; 47:14; 58:12. BDB [992] suggests that it is a pausal form of the noun, meaning "a sitting still". Kaiser [1974: 287] gives a list of the more common emendations and translations of the phrase but with Barthélemy [212] he retains the MT and translates rhetorically "Rahab are they? - Inactivity!" Fohrer [1967a: 96] and Wildberger [1159] read the phrase as רהב המִשְׁכָּת and translates "Rahab that is stilled". Whatever the reading, the meaning in the context is clear. Rahab is a symbol for Egypt; after all the deafening noises and dangers of the journey through the desert, there follows the anti-climax of encountering the deadly silence of Egypt.

## CONTEXT

The redactor who inserted the heading clearly intended to introduce a new beginning; the two words מִשָּׁן, בְּהִמָּה orientate the reader to ideas contained within v6-7; יִשָּׁן, from the same root as מִשָּׁן, indicates the removal of the riches and בְּהִמָּה is a collective word for the animals which are later specifically named.

Yet v6-7 also continue the theme of v1-5. The phrase עַם לֹא יוֹעִיל assures the reader that it is the same people who are being condemned. The list of names associated with Egypt is continued - Egypt, Philistia, Zoan, Hanes, (v1-5) and Negeb, Egypt, Rahab (v6-7). The introduction in v6a makes the reader anticipate something new but only to find that v6-7 repeats the same theme of the utter futility of seeking Egypt's help, found in v1-5. In this way the second oracle repeats the message of the first and reinforces it with even greater clarity.



Isaiah 30: 8-17

## INTRODUCTION

Opinions differ as to the various units within 30:8-17. The majority of scholars (Duhm [195], Marti [221], Childs [1967: 246], Clements [1980a: 246] and Wildberger [1168]) treat the section as a composite unit. Gonçalves [167] separates v15-17 from v8-14 and sees in it an independent literary unit. Childs [1967: 36] finds v8-17 "clear and straightforward from a form critical point of view": he sees two separate oracles which follow the invective threat pattern. Most commentators since Childs take v9-11, v12-14 and v15-17 as self-contained sayings which come from Isaiah and which present different images of the judgment Judah has brought upon herself in the crisis of 701. Kaiser [1974: 296] is isolated in disputing v15-17 to Isaiah and in ascribing it to a post-exilic redactor. Some commentators (Fohrer [1967a: 101], Clements [1980a: 246] and Gonçalves [167]) regard v17 as an addition influenced by 1:8; the purpose of the addition was to alleviate the dire threat of v16 and to show that Jerusalem, if not Judah, would survive.

Only Kaiser [1974: 292] and Vermeylen [1977: 413-16] explore to any extent the influence the redactor has had on the present arrangement of 30:8-17. Kaiser is interested in how the redactor has reworked the Isaianic material in the light of the disaster of 586. Vermeylen sees the hand of a deuteronomic redactor in the section.

Given the composite nature of the section, it makes for a richer reading to see v8-17 as part of a wider unit beginning at v1 and ending at v17. This division of the text seems apt for three reasons: firstly, throughout v1-17, Yahweh speaks in the first person while in v18-33 Yahweh is referred to in the third person. Secondly, the theme of the futility of resorting to military alliances acts as an *inclusio* to the unit

in v1-5 and v16-17 and is not referred to again in the rest of the chapter. Thirdly, the section is unified by a consistent preoccupation with the rejection of the word of Yahweh (1). Of these three reasons, it is the third that reveals the editorial priority in the present arrangement of the text.

In v1, Yahweh delivers a solemn oracle **נאם יְהוָה**. Early on in the section, Yahweh complains that his word is not sought **פִּי לֹא שָׁאֲלוּ** (2). The importance of the word of Yahweh is again emphasized in v6 by the noun **מִשָּׁא**. **מִשָּׁא** seems almost an intrusion in that it introduces a title that is not really necessary since the theme of v6-7 continues that of v1-5. However, the purpose of **מִשָּׁא** is not to introduce a new section but to emphasize that what follows is the word of Yahweh. In v2 the Judeans seek Egypt's help without consulting Yahweh; now in v6f, they receive an oracle concerning their plans whether they seek it or not. It is likely that v7, despite the problem with the phrase **רָהַב הֵם שָׁבֵת**, concerns the silence of Rahab which symbolizes the silence of Egypt; Egypt's silence contrasts with the word of Yahweh.

The syntax of v8 shows that it is Yahweh who speaks: the verbs **כָּתַב בּוֹא** are in the imperative singular and are addressed to Isaiah: the plural **אַתֶּם** refers to the people in the third person. V9 is linked to v8 by an explicative **כִּי**. In v9b the people have refused to hear the instruction of Yahweh which he has spoken in v1-7; they are rebellious sons **בָּנִים נַחֲשִׁים**. The similarity of this phrase with **בָּנִים סוֹרְרִים** in v1

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1. Goncalvez states that there are three speakers: the prophet (v9,10,12a), the addressees (v10-11), Yahweh (v12a-14). However, I prefer to see the passage in terms of the words spoken by Yahweh and his adversaries. Any words spoken by the prophet only serve to indicate that it is Yahweh who speaks and so his role is neutralized.
  2. The noun **פִּי** only occurs in two further texts in First Isaiah, 1:20 and 34:16, both stressing the authority of Yahweh's word in the phrase **כִּי פִי יְהוָה דָּבַר**.

ensures the unity of v 1-7 with v8-17. In particular it reveals that by תורת יהוה is meant the instruction given in v1-7. V9 is connected to v8 - so since they refuse to *hear* the instruction of Yahweh described in the oracles in 1-7, it is to be *written and inscribed* (v8a). Such an action ensures the permanency of the message of Yahweh (v8b).

V10-11 introduce the first words of the people, words put into their mouth by Yahweh. Each sentiment expressed by the people in v10-11 involves a rejection of the word of Yahweh starting with the rejection of the seers and the perverting of the function of the prophets. The role of both groups is to communicate the word of Yahweh but now they are ordered to speak not Yahweh's word but false illusions. The command in v11 to leave the way and turn aside from the path is directly contrary to Yahweh's word found in the Pentateuch: Ex 32:8; Deut 9:12,16; 11:28; 31:29 where they are urged to follow his way. The words of the people in v10-11 amount to an outright rejection of Yahweh's word.

In v12a<sup>β</sup>, the phrase ברבר הזה refers to the instruction given in v1-7; it is to be connected to v9b and in particular to the phrase תורת יהוה (1). The objects of the verbs בטח, שען are normally Yahweh and so it is ironic that in v12b the people should trust and rely on עשק ונלוז. The word עשק (not emended), although it denotes primarily oppression in the context of social justice, expresses the idea of turning away from Yahweh in Isa 59:13 and the word נלוז, only found in Proverbs, also has as its root meaning the idea of turning away. V12a and v12b taken together, therefore, suggest that trust and confidence are to be found in

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1. In 5:24, the verb מאס has תורת יהוה as its object.

the word of Yahweh. הָעֵץ הַזֶּה in v13a refers back to v12b and to the question of misplaced trust.

In v15, Yahweh speaks once more but, as in v9,12, the people refuse to hear his word and mock it (1). The words of the people in v16 are highly ironic; what the people actually rely on will ultimately be their downfall. V15-17 reflects the same movement as that which takes place within 28:9-13.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 8

עַתָּה: The adverb is found within chs 28-33 in 28:22; 29:22; 30:8; 33:10. In three instances, 28:22; 30:8; 33:10, it suggests the immediacy of the threat against the wicked as opposed to the just who will no longer be ashamed, 29:22.

כַּתְּבָה עַל-לֹחַ: The root כָּתַב occurs in 4:3; 8:1; 10:1,19; 30:8; 44:5. Isa 8:1 and 30:8 appear to be similar but in the former the writing down is highly symbolic and concerns a very specific historical situation, while in 30:8 what is to be written down is not as clearly defined. Among the commentators, two positions are adopted. Either the pronouns attached to the verbs כַּתְּבָה, חָקָה refer to something very specific such as the inscription in v7 [Fohrer 1967a: 95] or it refers to a nucleus of Isaiah's prophecies, possibly the core of chs 28-30 [Kaiser 1974: 292, Jensen 1973: 113, Clements 1980a: 246].

Those who support the latter position look to 8:16-18 to support

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1. Goncalvez [166-67] has shown in some detail how each phrase expressed by Yahweh in v15a is picked up and contradicted by the people in v16.

their view. Considering the present context, it is more likely that a specific inscription is not intended but rather the instruction of Yahweh communicated through Isaiah especially in 30:1-7.

Duhm [195], Marti [222] and Fohrer [1967a: 94] consider על-לוח אתם a gloss introduced under the influence of 8:1. However, it makes for a richer reading if it is retained because of the parallel with על-ספר.

The noun לוח occurs in Isaiah only in 30:8; elsewhere in prophetic literature it occurs in Jer 17:1; Ez 27:5; Hab 2:2. It is often found in Exodus and Deuteronomy and denotes the tablets of stone upon which Yahweh wrote the Law (1). In Prov 3:3; 7:3; it is used metaphorically: virtues such as loyalty and faithfulness should be written on the tablets of one's heart. In Jer 17:1, on the other hand, the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron on the tablet of their heart. In Hab 2:2, Yahweh orders the prophet to write the vision on tablets so that it remains clear and plain.

In Isa 30:8, it is tempting to see in לוח a reference to the tablet of the law - the law which the rebellious sons have ignored. Where כתב and לוח appear together it is often the Law that Yahweh writes upon the tablet (2).

על-ספר חקה: Like לוח, to which it is parallel, ספר is often associated with the Law in the phrase ספר ברית (3) or ספר התורה (4). In Isaiah

1. Ex 24:12; 31:18; 32:15,16,19; 34:1,4,28,29; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:9,10,11,15,17; 10:1,2,3,4,5; also 1 Kgs 7:36; 8:9; 2 Chron.5:10. It can also refer to the "planks" of a construction as in Ex 27:8, 38:7; 1 Kgs 7:36; Cant 8:9; Ez 27:5.
2. Ex 24:1 2; 31:18; 32:15; 34:1,28; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:10; 10:4.
3. Ex 24:7; 2 Kgs 23:2,21; 2 Chron 34:30.
4. Deut 17:18; 28:61; 29:19,20; 30:10; 31:24,26; Josh 1:8; 8:31,34; 23:6; 24:26; 2 Kgs 14:6; 22:8,10,11; 2 Chron 17:9; 25:4; 34:14,15; 35:12.

ספר is almost exclusively restricted to chs 29-30 where it occurs in 29:11,12,18 and 30: 8 (1). Isa 29:11,12,18 cannot be attributed to Isaiah nor can 34:4,16. If v8 comes from the redactor who put ch 30 together, לוח may contain an implicit reference to the Law; an association that fits easily with ספר in ch 29.

חקק: The verb can mean "to draw" or "inscribe" (2) but the root can also denote authority: the piel participle (3) denotes "one who governs" or "commander". The piel is used of those who rule in Prov 31:4 and in the following verse the pual participle denotes what has been decreed. In Ps 60:9; 108:9, the word מחקקי means "my sceptre".

In Isaiah the root occurs in 10:1; 22:16; 30:8; 33:22; 49:16. In Isa 22:16; 30:8 and 49:16 it means "to engrave" but in 10:1 and 33:22 it has the meaning "to govern" (4).

ליום אחרון: The phrase occurs in Isa 30:8 and Prov 31:25. A similar phrase, לדור אחרון occurs in Deut 29:21; Ps 48:14; 78:4,6; 102:19 in contexts which concern acknowledging the name of Yahweh in future generations - a contrast to Isa 30:8 where it is Judah's shameful behaviour that is being recorded for the future.

לְעָרָה repointed to לְעָרָה: The word עָרָה with ל occurs in Gen 31:44; Deut 31:19,21,26; Job 16:8; Isa 30:8; Jer 19:20; 42:5; Mic 1:2. In Deut 31:19,21, the Song of Moses in ch 32 is to be a witness to come. The song, a

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1. Also in Isa 34:4,16; 50:1
  2. Job 19:23; Prov 8:27,29; Ez 4:1; 23:14.
  3. Gen 49:10; Num 21:18; Deut 33:21; Judg 5:9,14; Isa 33:22.
  4. There is a similarity in sound between חקק in 30:8 and the plural of חק which denotes the commands of Yahweh expressed through the Torah.

summary of Yahweh's saving actions, is to act as a witness to confront the people when they turn to other gods and break the covenant. In Deut 31:26, it is the book of the law ספר התורה which will act as a witness against the people in the days to come when they become rebellious מרי (Deut 31:28) and turn away from the way, וסרתם מן-הדרך (31:29).

There are similarities between Deut 31:19f and Isa 30:8f. Both texts are concerned with a time in the future (ליום אחרון) when the people become rebellious (מרה) and turn aside from the path (סור מן-הדרך). Then the book of the law (Deut 31) or what is written in the book (Isa 30) will stand as a witness against them. Such similarities may show that the Law of Yahweh is implicit in v8 as a criterion against which actions and attitudes are judged.

In the prose passage of Jer 42:5, a similar perspective is found; Yahweh will act as a witness (לער) against the people if they do not listen to and obey his word.

### Verse 9

עם-מרי: The adjective מרי occurs in Isaiah only in 30:9 and the verb מרה in 1:20. It occurs in Num 17:25; Deut 31:27; 1 Sam 15:23 but particularly in Ezekiel where it occurs 14 times (1). In Deut 31:26-27, the book of the Law is a witness to the stubbornness and rebellion of the people. In 1 Sam 15:22-23, refusal to obey the word of Yahweh amounts to rebellion. Saul will not become king because he has rejected his word and in Ezekiel, Israel is often described as a rebellious house because they refuse to hear his word.

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1. Ez 2:5,6,7,8; 3:9,26,27; 12:2,3,9,25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6.

In Isaiah מרי describes the attitude of the people who will not hear the word of Yahweh. In 1:19-20, אם-תאבו ושמעתם is the antithesis of אם-תמאנו. In 30:9, the same verbs are used (מרר, שמע, אבה) to describe the rebellion of the people who will not hear the word of Yahweh.

כחש: Although the plural participle form occurs only in Isa 30:9, the root of the verb meaning "to lie" (1) and the noun meaning "a lie" (2) are well attested in a wide range of texts throughout the OT. It is never found parallel to מרי except in Isa 30:9.

לא אבו שמוע: As in 28:12, the guilt of the people lies in their refusal to hear.

תורה: (See ירה in 28:12.). Gonçalves [222] notes that תורה is found associated with יהוה in 5:24; 30:9; or אלהנו in 1:10. It is parallel to יהוה in 1:10; to אמרת-קדוש ישראל in 5:24; and to תעורה in 8:16. It always refers to the instruction of Yahweh transmitted through Isaiah. This is also the sense of the verb in Isa 28:9.

Jensen [1973: 116] notes that תורה refers in a general way to the teaching of Isaiah but argues that Isaiah consciously borrowed the word from wisdom circles - in particular the royal advisers. Isaiah advocated a plan of rest and quiet as opposed to the wise men whose advice was to seek an alliance with Egypt. For Isaiah, עצה was too narrow a term to designate Yahweh's plan and so he adopted the word תורה. It is used as a wisdom word and is addressed to the royal policy makers. It stands in

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1. Gen 18:5; Lev 5:21; 5:22; 19:11; Deut 33:29; Josh 7:11; 24:27; 2 Sam 22:45; 1 Kgs 13:18; Job 8:18; 31:28; Ps 18:45; 66:3; 81:16; 109:24; Prov 30:9; Isa 59:13; Jer 5:12; Hos 4:2; 9:2; Hab 3:17; Zech 13:4.
  2. Job 16:8; Ps 59:13; Hos 7:3; 10:13; Nah 3:1.



close relation to בָּנִים - in wisdom traditions, advice was directed to sons. The call to hear instruction is typical of wisdom traditions. Jensen [1973: 117] makes a distinction between שמע meaning "to obey" and "to listen" e.g. שמע in Prov 1:8 is different from that in Deut 28:1. In Isaiah, the call to obey in 1:19 is different from the call to hear instruction in 6:9. To connect further the word תורה with wisdom literature, Jensen [1973: 117] notes that the phrase שמע-תורה is not found in Deuteronomy, although both words separately occur often there. The phrase is found in Zech 7:12 but Jensen puts this down to literary dependence on Isaiah. The only other OT text which has the phrase is Prov 28:9.

### Verse 10

רֹאֶה is found in the plural only in Isa 30:10. In the singular it refers to Samuel (1) or to Hanani (2). A comment is made in 1 Sam 9:9 that the seer was the predecessor of the prophet. It was the function of the seer to inquire of Yahweh (1 Sam 9:9).

חֲזִים: (See 29:10). The prophets and seers play a more positive role in 30:10 than in 29:10, unless, of course, they are persuaded to turn away from the right path.

נִכְחוֹת: In the singular the word occurs Isa 57:2; 59:14; Amos 3:10. In the plural it occurs in Isa 26:10; 30:10. It means "what is right" or "upright". Jensen argues [1973: 118] that this is a wisdom word.

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1. 1 Sam 9:9,11,18,19; 1 Chron 9:22; 26:28; 29:29.
  2. 2 Chron 16:7,10.

He cites Terrien [112] who, arguing for wisdom influence in Amos, points to the use of the singular in Amos 3:10; Wolff [30] who sees it as a wisdom term and refers to Prov 8:8; 24:26; Sir.11:21; and Crenshaw [46] who also draws attention to the wisdom force of this word.

חלקות: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 30:10 and the verb in 41:7. The word literally means "smooth": it is used to describe Jacob in Gen 27:11 as opposed to Esau who is hairy. It is a proper name in Josh 11:17; 12:7. It has a metaphorical sense "insincere" in Ps 12:3,4; 73:18; Prov 5:3; 26:28; Ez 12:24; Dan 11:32; it is this sense which it has in Isa 30:10.

מהתלות: The noun from the root תלל, means "deception", "illusion". Elsewhere the verb normally occurs in the hiphil (1). Gesenius [233] points out that from the hiphil comes a secondary root התל found in 1 Kgs 18:27 and Job 17:2. The meaning of the root is clear: "to deceive" as in Gen 31:7; Job 13:9; Jer 9:4 or "to mock" as in Ex 8:25; Judg 16:10,13,15. In Isaiah the hophal occurs in 44:20, in a prose section where it describes a mind that has been "deceived" by idols. In Isa 30:10, the word is parallel to חלקות and so "illusions" (RSV) is a good translation.

### Verse 11

סור: The verb סור is often used for turning away from Yahweh especially in the Pentateuch and the historical books. In Isaiah although the root occurs, it never has exactly the same nuance nor does it occur in the same phrase as in 30:16.

ררר: The use of the word in 30:11 is more typical of Second Isaiah than

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1. Gen 31:7; Ex 8:25; Judg 16:10,13,15; Job 13:9; Isa 44:20; Jer 9:4.

of First Isaiah. Of the 11 times the word is used in First Isaiah (1) only in 2:3; 8:11; 30:21; 35:8 is the word used metaphorically. The Isaian origin of these texts is doubtful; 8:11 and 30:21 are in prose; 2:3 is also found in Micah; 35:8 comes from a chapter which has many ties with Second Isaiah.

All of these texts reflect the use of the word in Second Isaiah where it is a key word: it denotes the way of Yahweh which is righteous (2) as opposed to the way of man which is evil (3). It can also refer to the route or way in which the exiles return (4). Even in the last category and particularly in Isa 42:16, the use of the noun may be more metaphorical and symbolic than literal. In First as in Second Isaiah דרך denotes the righteous way of Yahweh in 2:3; 30:11,21; 35:8 but the way of the evil in 8:11.

The phrase מן-הדרך סורו is found in Ex 32:8; Deut 9:12,16; 11:28; 31:29; Judg 2:7; Mal 2:8 where the reason given for turning aside from the way "which Yahweh commanded them" (Ex 32:8) is the pursuit of idols.

ארח occurs in Isaiah 8 times (5). In 26:7,8 and 40:14, the path of the righteous is also the path of Yahweh. In 3:12 the leaders confuse the paths of the people; 2:3 refers to the ways and paths of Yahweh. It is parallel to דרך in 2:3; 30:11 and 40:14. ארח is found frequently in Psalms (6), and Proverbs (7).

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1. Isa 2:3; 8:11,23; 10:24,26; 15:5; 30:11,21; 35:3; 37:29,34.
  2. Isa 40:14; 42:24; 48:17; 55:7,9; 58:2; 59:8; 63:17; 64:4.
  3. Isa 40:27; 45:13; 48:13; 53:6; 56:11; 57:10 57:17,18; 58:13; 65:2; 66:3.
  4. Isa 40:3; 42:16; 43:16,19; 51:10; 57:14; 62:10.
  5. Isa 2:3; 3:12; 26:7,8; 30:11; 33:8; 40:14; 41:3.
  6. Ps 8:9; 16:11; 17:4; 19:6; 25:4,10; 27:11; 44:19; 119:9,15,101, 104,128; 139:3; 142:4.
  7. Prov 2:8, 13,15,19; 3:6; 4:14,18; 5:6; 8:20; 9:15; 10:17; 12:28; 15:10,19,24; 17:23; 22:25.

It occurs also in Job (1) where the path of life is opposed to the path of the wicked.

Jensen [1973: 119] argues that the parallel אַרְחָ, רַרְךְ is a wisdom characteristic. The words are parallel in Ps 25:4; 27:11; and in Prov 2:8,13,19; 3:6; 4:14; 9:15; 12:28; 15:19. Isa 40:14 is a wisdom context where the parallel occurs. Of the 4 remaining passages where parallels occur (Gen 49:17; Joel 2:7; Isa 3:12; 30:11), the first two employ the terms in a literal and not a figurative sense. Jeremiah uses רַרְךְ 56 times and Ezekiel more than 100 but never with אַרְחָ. Apart from Joel 2:7 and Mic 4:2, אַרְחָ is not found at all in the prophets outside of Isa chs 1-41 where it occurs 8 times. Jensen [1973: 119] concludes that both nouns, used together in a figurative sense, occur 10 times in wisdom compositions or in texts that show clear wisdom influence (i.e. 8 times in Proverbs, in Ps 25:4 and Isa 40:14). Such usage is therefore typical wisdom procedure.

שְׁבַת within chs 28-33 occurs in 30:11 and 33:8. In the latter text, the עֲבַר-אַרְחָ ceases but unlike 30:11, אַרְחָ is probably used in a literal sense.

### Verse 12

מָאָס occurs in Isa 5:24; 7:15,16; 8:6; 30:12; 31:7; 33:8,15; 41:9; 54:6. It can be used negatively where Yahweh or realities associated with him are rejected, his Torah (5:24), the waters of Shiloah (8:6) or his word (30:12). Elsewhere in the OT, it is normally used in a negative sense: rejecting Yahweh (Num 11:20; 1 Sam 10:19), his word (1 Sam 15:23,26; Jer 8;9), his Torah (Jer 6:19; Amos 2:4), his ordinances (Lev 26:15; 2 Kgs 17:15; Ez 5:6; 20:13,16,24). In Ps 36:5, the wicked person is the one who does not reject evil. On the other hand, it can be used positively of refusing evil

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1. Job 6:18,19; 8:13; 13:27; 16:22; 19:8; 22:15; 30:12; 31:22; 33:11; 34:11.

(Isa 7:15,16), rejecting idols (Isa 31:7) or the gain of oppression (Isa 33:15). Verse 12 is similar to the phrase **כִּי מֵאִסּוֹ אֶת-תּוֹרַת יְהוָה** in 5:24. Because of this similarity it may be fitting to link **הַרְבֵּר הַזֶּה** in v12, which has no immediate referent, with **תּוֹרָה** in v9.

**בָּטַח**: Derivatives from the root occur 22 times in Isaiah (1). In many cases, Yahweh or realities associated with him are the objects of trust (12:2; 14:30; 26:3,4; 30:15; 32:17,18; 50:10). In other cases, trust in objects opposed to Yahweh is condemned (30:12; 32:9; 42:17; 47:8,10; 59:4). In chs 30-33, it is clearly shown that to trust in something other than Yahweh is to misplace one's trust. In 30:12, trust in oppression and perversion is counteracted by an appeal for trust and rest in Yahweh (v15). In 31:1a, trust and reliance on Egypt is opposed to trust in Yahweh in v1b. In 32:9, the picture of false trust and security is replaced by a different image of trust and security in v17-18.

**שָׁעַן**, always found in the niphal, can mean literally to rest or lean upon (2). Yahweh is sometimes the object of the verb, most consistently in 2 Chronicles (13:18; 14:10; 16:7,8) where leaning upon him ensures success in battle; not relying upon him ensures failure (Mic 3:11). Prov 3:5 exhorts the righteous to lean upon him but Job (24:23) perceives ironically that Yahweh seems to be a support only to the powerful and mighty.

The verb occurs 4 times in Isaiah (10:20; 30:12; 31:1; 50:10). Yahweh is the object of the verb in 10:20 and 50:10. It is used ironically in 30:12 and 31:1 in that the people rely on oppression and perversion or on the

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1. Trust in Yahweh is a particularly important issues in ch 36 where the verb occurs 6 times (v4,5,6,7,9,15).
  2. Gen 18:4; Num 21:15; Judg 16:26; 2 Sam 1:6; 2 Kgs 5:18; 7:2,17; Job 8:15; Ez 29:7.

horses of Egypt rather than upon Yahweh.

The verb is found parallel to **בטח** in Prov 3:5; Isa 30:12; 31:1; 50:10. The verb **שען** (see 32:9) is parallel to **בטח** in 32:9, a text which has similarities with 30:12. In ch 30, the rebellious sons (v9) who trust in perversion and oppression and rely on them (v12) will experience total destruction (v13-14). In ch 32, the smug and complacent daughters (v9) face similar destruction (v12-14).

**עשק**: The verb occurs in Isa 23:11 and 52:4. The noun **עֲשָׂק** occurs in Isa 30:12; 54:14; 59:13 (1). The noun generally denotes oppression within the context of social justice (2) but it can also denote the oppression of an external enemy, e.g. Assyria in Isa 52:4. In Isa 54:14, the people are promised peace and security – far from any oppression.

Isa 59:13 is interesting in that it occurs in a context which contains a list of sins which all involve a turning away from Yahweh: turning away from Yahweh (**נָסוּג מֵאַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ**), rebelling against him (**כַּחַשׁ בִּיהוָה**) and speaking oppression and revolt (**עֲשָׂק וְסִרָה**). The nuance of turning away from Yahweh is more suitable for **עשק** in 30:12 than oppression in the sense of social injustice since the noun is parallel to **נָלוּז** which always has this nuance. The idea of turning away intensifies the irony of v12b. Normally the object of the verbs **בטח**, **שען** is Yahweh but here the people are accused of trusting and relying upon their sin of turning away from him. Gonçalves [223] is one of the few commentators who does not emend the word; he argues that the word refers to social injustice and explains it in the context of v6-7: it refers to the social injustice that would follow a treaty with Egypt.

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1. Elsewhere in Lev 5:23; Ps 62:11; 73:8; 119:134; Qoh 5:7; Ez 18:18; 22:7,12,29.
  2. Lev 5:23; Ps 62:11; 73:8; 119:134; Qoh 5:7.

Some commentators [Wildberger 1174], Clements [1980a: 247] following the LXX, emend the word to שָׁעָ "a crooked way" [BDB: 786] on the grounds that this makes a better parallel to נָלֹץ. The word שָׁעָ occurs in Proverbs 7 times (1) and in Deut 32:5; Ps 18:27; 101:4 but the two words only appear together in Isa 30:12 (emended) and Prov 2:15. The emendation is therefore not convincing since firstly, it involves the changing of consonants and not merely the vocalization and secondly, there are not sufficient parallels elsewhere to support it.

נָלֹץ: Apart from Isa 30:12, the root לֹץ occurs only in Proverbs and in Sirach. In the qal and hiphil it means "to deflect" , "to turn away from". (Prov 3:21; 4:21). In the niphil it means "to turn oneself away from" and so has the meaning "perverse" or "wayward". It describes the paths of evil men in Prov 2:15 and their ways in Prov 14:2. The perverse man is abhorred by Yahweh in Prov 4:24. It is used of the deceit of dreams in Sir 34:8. It always describes those who do not follow the way of Yahweh and in Isa 30:12 is opposite in meaning to תּוֹרָה in v9.

### Verse 13

עוֹן occurs very frequently in both First (2) and Second (3) Isaiah. It always denotes guilt or sin and is often parallel to חַטָּא e.g. 1:4; 5:18; 40:2. While First Isaiah opens with an expression of the sin and guilt of the people in 1:4, Second Isaiah opens with Yahweh forgiving their sin and guilt.

פָּרַץ: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 5:5; 54:3 and the noun in 30:13; 58:12.

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1. Prov 2:15; 8:8; 11:20; 17:20; 19:1; 22:5; 28:6.
  2. Isa 1:4; 5:18; 6:7; 13:11; 14:21; 22:14; 26:21; 27:9; 30:13; 33:24.
  3. Isa 40:2; 43:24; 50:1; 53:5,6,11; 57:17; 59:2,3,12; 64:5,6,8; 65:7.

In 5:5, Yahweh breaks down the wall of the vineyard and in 58:12, the people restore and build up the breach.

נבעה: Outside of Isaiah (21:12; 30:13; 64:1) it is only found in Ob 6. In Isa 21:12 and Ob 6, the meaning is "to seek". In 30:13, 64:1, the context suggests that it contains the idea of destruction or terror.

חומה is frequent in Isaiah (1). In First Isaiah especially, the noun is used to express the idea of the wall as a strong fortification.

שגב: The verb occurs in 2:11,17; 9:10; 12:4; 26:5; 30:13; 33:5; the noun משגב in 25:12; 33:16. The meaning "to be high" is generally used figuratively to express the haughtiness of the proud (2:11,17). Yahweh alone should be exalted (12:4; 33:5). Even in the phrase קריה נשגבה in 26:5, it is used figuratively to suggest pride. In 25:12, Yahweh will bring down the pride of Moab by bringing down their lofty fortifications. The just man, on the other hand, will dwell on the heights in 33:16.

פתאם לפתא: (See 29:5).

שבר: (See 28:13). The verb occurs in ch 30 once and the noun 3 times in 30:13,14,26. The occurrence at the start of v14 may be due to dittography or it may have been repeated for emphasis – a *reprise* of the word in v13 which would indicate that v14 was added to v13. The purpose of the addition might have been to resume the theme of 29:16. In 30:26 Yahweh will bind up the "blow" (שבר) that has been delivered to his people. Bourget [420] notes that in the OT, the root שבר occurs

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1. Isa 2:15; 22:10,11; 25:12; 26:1; 30:13; 36:11,12; 49:16; 56:5; 60:10,18; 62:6.



in a metaphorical sense most often in Isaiah (8 times) (1) and Jeremiah (8 times).

#### Verse 14

נבל in the OT is the word used to denote a musical instrument (2) but it can also mean a skin or container to hold wine or oil (3). The two instances of the word most similar to Isa 30:14 are Jer 48:12 and Lam 4:2. The dashing in pieces of the vessels of Moab signifies that the end has come in Jer 48:12. In Lam 4:2, the sons of Zion are compared to earthen pots, the work of a potter's hands. Only in Isa 30:14 and Lam 4:2, are נבל, יוצר found together. In its immediate context, however, the simile in v14 resumes that of 29:16.

כתת and במכתתו come from the root כתת. It occurs in Isaiah in 2:4; 24:12; 30:14 (4). The basic meaning of the root is "to batter down" or "to crush".

חמל: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 9:18 and 30:14 and the noun חמלה meaning "clemency" in Isa 63:9. The verb occurs in prophetic literature to denote the unpitying attitude of Yahweh towards Jerusalem (Jer 13:14; 15:5; 21:7; Lam 2:2; 2:17; 3:43) and in condemnations of Jerusalem's preoccupation with idols in Ezekiel (Ez 5:11; 7:49; 8:18; 9:10; 16:5). The verb in Isa 30:14 stresses the finality and totality of Judah's

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1. Isa 8:15; 14:5,25,29; 28:13; 30:14; 38:13; 42:3.
  2. 1 Sam 10:3; 2 Sam 6:5; 1 Kgs 10:12; 1 Chron 13:8; 15:16,20,28; 16:5; 25:2,6; 2 Chron 5:12; 9:11; 20:28; 29:25; Ps 33:2; 57:9; 71:22; 81:3; 92:4; 108:3; 144:9; 156:3; Is. 5:12; 14:11; Amos 5:23; 6:5
  3. 1 Sam 1:24; 10:3; 16:1; 25:8; 2 Sam 16:1; Job 38:37; Isa 22:24; Jer 13:12.
  4. Elsewhere in Lev 22:24; Num 14:45; Deut 1:44; 9:21; 2 Kgs 18:4; 2 Chron 15:6; 34:7; Ps 89:24; Job 4:20; Jer 46:5; Mic 1:7; 4:3; Joel 4:10; Zech 11:6.

punishment.

חרש occurs in Isa 30:14; 45:9 (1). It is only found in Isaiah in the image of the potter. The phrase נלי-חרש occurs in the Pentateuch (2) and in Jer 32:14. The word חרש lends itself to similes in Job 2:8; 41:22; Ps 22:16; Prov 26:23. The closest texts to Isa 30:14 are Jer 19:1 and Lam 4:2. In the first text the breaking of the flask symbolizes Yahweh's punishment of Jerusalem; in the second, the only other text where יוצר and נבל occur together, the sons of Zion are compared to earthen vessels.

חתה: The verb occurs in Isa 30:14; Ps 52:7 and Prov 6:27; 25:22. In the OT, only in Proverbs and Isa 30:14 is it a question of carrying (coals of) fire.

יקוד is a hapax but other forms of the root יקר appear. The participle יקרה is found in Isa 65:5; the imperfect in Isa 10:16; the noun יקר in Isa 10:16; the noun מוקר in Isa 33:14 and Ps 102:4 (3). Literally, the word means "a fire". This is the meaning in Lev 6:2,5,6 which gives instruction about the burnt offering and in Ps 102:4 where the word also has a literal meaning. Normally in Isaiah the fire or burning refers to the anger of Yahweh (10:16; 33:14; 65:5) (4). Elsewhere forms from the root also refer to the consuming anger of Yahweh (Deut 32:22; Jer 15:14; 17:4).

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1. Elsewhere in Lev 6:21; 11:33; 14:5,50; 15:12; Num 5:17; Job 2:8; 41:22; Ps 22:16; Prov 26:23; Jer 19:1; 32:14; Lam 4:2.
  2. Lev 6:21; 11:33; 14:5,50; 15:12; Num 5:17.
  3. Elsewhere the root occurs in Lev 6:2,5,6; Deut 32:22; Jer 15:14; 17:4.
  4. This rare word appears alongside the phrase שית ושמיר in 10:17, a phrase which is only found in Isaiah.

השח: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 20:4; 30:14; 47:2; 52:10 (1). The verb always means "to uncover". The exception is Isa 30:14 and Hag 2:16. Only in these two texts is the verb used of carrying a liquid, water in the case of Isaiah and wine in the case of Haggai.

גבה occurs in the singular only in Isa 30:14 and in the plural in Ez 47:11.

### Verse 15

שוב with the meaning "to repent" is found in Isaiah in 1:27; 6:10; 9:12; 19:22; 31:6; 44:22; 55:7. In 30:15, Duhm [198] suggests that שובה means "a turning away from" (a military alliance with Egypt). Others [Clements 1980: 248] suggest that it means a returning to Yahweh. Dahood [1958:41-43] sees it as coming from the root ישב "to sit", "to be still" and Wildberger [1181] uses the same derivation in his translation.

נוח: (See 28:12). The verb resumes the theme found in 28:12 and sustains it until the question of rest is taken up and resolved in 32:18. Jensen [1973: 119] points out that the form נחת is only found in Wisdom compositions (2).

הושיע: The word is more typical of Second Isaiah than of First Isaiah. In First Isaiah the verb occurs eight times (3), the noun ישע once (17:10) and the noun ישועה six times (4). In Second Isaiah the verb occurs 19

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1. Elsewhere in Ps 29:9; Jer 13:26; 49:10; Ez 1:7; Joel 1:7; Hag 2:16.
  2. Job 36:16; Prov 29:9; Qoh 4:6; 6:5; 9:17; Sir 11:19; 12:11; 31:21.
  3. Isa 19:20; 25:9; 30:15; 33:22; 35:4; 37:20.35; 38:20.
  4. Isa 12:2,3; 25:9; 26:1; 33:2,6.

times (1), the noun *עָשׂוּ* four times (2) and the noun *שְׁוֹעָה* thirteen times (3). Even In First Isaiah, the texts where the root occurs are almost certainly late. Such insertions of the theme of salvation into First Isaiah orientate the reader towards the emphasis on the theme found in Second Isaiah.

*שָׁקַט* occurs in First Isaiah in 7:4; 14:7; 18:4; 30:15; 32:17. In Second Isaiah it occurs in 57:20 and 62:1. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, it occurs in Jer 30:10; 47:6,7; 49:23; Ez 16:42,49; 38:11; Zech 1:11. It is found occasionally in the Psalms (76:9; 83:2 and 94:13). In Job it occurs in 3:13,26; 34:29 and once in Ruth 3:18. The most consistent use of the verb is found in the books of Joshua, Judges and Chronicles where it means rest in the sense of the absence of war, e.g. Josh 11:23; 14:15. In Judges one reads of the rest brought about by Othniel in 3:11; of the rest following the Song of Deborah in 5:31; of the rest brought about by Gideon in 8:28. In 2 Chronicles, the rest is brought about by Asa in 13:23; 14:4,5; by Jehoshaphat in 20:30 and Jehoiada in 23:21. Perhaps the most paradigmatic is the rest and peace associated with Solomon in 1 Chron 22:9 (4).

In Ps 94:13, the same theme is found in the context of the attacks of the wicked upon the just. It is stated here that rest is found in the teaching of the law (v12). In Jer 30:10, Yahweh promises to give the people rest and ease from the troublesome nations:

וְשָׁב יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁקַט וְשָׁאֲנָן

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1. Isa 43:3,11,12; 45:15,17,20,21,22; 46:7; 47:13,15; 49:25; 59:1,16; 63:1,5,8,9; 64:4.
  2. Isa 45:8; 51:5; 61:10; 62:11.
  3. Isa 45:17; 46:13; 49:6,8; 51:6,8; 52:7,10; 56:1; 59:11,17; 60:18; 62:1.
  4. In Zech 1:11 the theme of rest from war is found but in quite a different context.

A natural development of the theme of rest from war is the rest and security enjoyed during times of peace. In 1 Chron 4:40, when certain families go to seek pasture for their flocks, they find a land "broad, quiet and peaceful". In Judg 18:7, (and later in v27) a description is given of the security of the people of Laish:

העם .. יושבת-לבטח כמשפט צרנים שקט ובטח

This idea is also found in Ez 38:11 where "the quiet people who dwell securely" can live without walls and without bars and gates. Such security and prosperity can sometimes lead to smugness and complacency as in the case of Moab in Jer 48:11:

שאנן מואב ... ושקט הוא

In Ez 16:49, the sin of the daughter of Sodom is that in spite of her "surfeit of food and prosperous ease"

שבעת-לחם ושלוח השקט

she did not help the poor and needy.

Isa 14:7 describes how the whole earth is at quiet and ease (נחה) once the king of Babylon has been defeated. The introduction to the section in v3, where Yahweh has given rest from pain and turmoil, is very much in keeping with the motif found in Joshua, Judges, Chronicles.

In Isa 7:3, the Lord's command to Ahaz is:

השמר והשקט אל-תירא

From the context, the verb here has the connotation of trusting and so is similar in theme to 30:15, 32:17.

Apart from Ez 16:49, the only two occurrences of the noun שקט in the OT occur in Isa 30:15; 32:17. In both texts, it is part of the word pair בשובה ונחת: in 30:15 the word pair is parallel to השקט ובטח and in

32:17 to שלום. The vocabulary of both texts is similar to Jer 30:10. The word pair השקט ובטח is similar to Judg 18:7.

Gonçalves [169-70] has carried out a survey of the verb בטח and שקט in relation to their occurrence in 30:15. He has found that when בטח is followed by a preposition ל, ב, על it means to trust or to have confidence in. More than half the uses of the verb followed by a preposition express trust in Yahweh: most of these uses are found in contexts where that which is trusted is opposed to Yahweh. Both the verb בטח + preposition and שׁען denote an attitude that one can have only towards Yahweh.

The verb בטח without a preposition means to feel secure (1). In this case, the subject of the verb believes that he is secure and sheltered from danger. Gonçalves [169] concludes that 30:15 denotes those who believe they are secure and who are at ease and without anxiety. He points out that the roots שקט, בטח found together always denote the situation of a people or a city which leads a peaceful life, e.g. Judg 18:7,27; Isa 32:17; Ez 38:11. By this word pair, the vulnerability of a people or a city is underlined – they make no defence and so fall prey to an unexpected aggressor. In 30:15 the word pair signifies peace and serenity which exclude any anxiety about their security.

The content of 30:15 appears somewhat similar to the rest from war motif in Joshua, Judges and Chronicles. The beginning of ch 30 refers to a league with Egypt in the face of the Assyrian threat and v16f pick up this theme. V15 is really conditional and implies a choice. The phrase שקט ובטח elsewhere (Judg 18:7; Jer 30:10) denotes peace and

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1. Judg 18:7,10,27; Job 6:20; 11:18; 40:23; Ps 27:3; Prov 11:15; 14:16; 28:1; Isa 12:2; 32:9,10,11; Jer 12:5.

security but such an idyllic picture does not suit the context here; rather it suggests that to do nothing is better than to enter into an alliance with Egypt. The phrase שָׁקֵט וּבִטָּח is best explained here in the light of the parallel phrase בְּשׁוּבָה וְנַחַת; taken together, the verse is recommending an attitude rather than giving practical political advice.

גְּבוּרָה resumes the theme of the power of Yahweh introduced in 28:6.

לֹא אֲבִיתֶם: The presence of the phrase in 30:9 and 30:15 is an intentional one. It unites v15-17 to v9-14 around the theme of refusing to hear the word of Yahweh.

Gonçalves [167] detects in v15-17 an adaptation of the classical structure of the oracle of judgment. The presence of a quotation of the addressees in the accusation and of a quotation of Yahweh in the announcement of judgment is common (1). On the other hand, a quotation of Yahweh directly opposed in the accusation only appears in Isa 28:7b-13, 28:14-18. By this literary technique, the prophet underlines the serious behaviour of the addressees who reject outright the word of Yahweh.

Hunter [232] sees the genre of v15 as a form of instruction (torah). It was placed after the preceding utterances because it serves as a specific example of an instruction of Yahweh which the people have refused to hear (v9,12). V15 is a précis of the normative attitudes and actions that Yahweh advocated throughout the centuries: it serves the purpose of presenting a standard against which the people can be judged guilty.

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1. Isa 22:13-14; Amos 2:11-15; 4:1-3; 6:13-14; 7:16-17; 8:4-8.

Verse 16

לֹא-כִי: Wildberger [1182] notes that the MT combination occurs in Gen 18:15b; 19:2; 42:12 meaning "no".

סוס occurs 8 times in Isaiah (1). The horse represents military strength. In 2:7, Yahweh rejects his people because the land is full of chariots and horses. In 30:16; 31:3; 36:8, horses are associated with Egypt and represent her military strength but in 43:17, Yahweh is able to destroy completely both horse and chariot.

נוס occurs 12 times in Isaiah (2). The contexts emphasize not the action of fleeing but rather the superior power of the oppressor and the reaction he inspires. In most cases, the oppressor is Assyria: the verb denotes the reaction of Gibeah before the advance of Assyria in 10:29 and the reaction of the Judeans before Assyria in 10:3; 20:6; 30:16. It also denotes the reaction to the might and anger of Yahweh in 13:14; 24:18; 31:8.

The combination of סוס and נוס is an example of effective assonance.

קל is an adjective meaning "swift" or "light", often found in the phrase "swift of foot". It occurs in Isa 5:26; 18:2; 19:1; 30:16 (3). Even the swift of foot or those who ride speedily cannot escape Yahweh (Jer 46:6; Amos 2:14,15).

The verb קלל in the piel means "to make light of", "to curse". It is found in Isa 8:21,23; 23:9; 65:20. In 49:6, it means "to be light". It is only found in the qal in Isa 30:16 and here it means "to be swift".

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1. Isa 2:7; 5:28; 30:16; 31:3; 36:8; 43:17; 63:13; 66:20.
  2. Isa 10:3,29; 13:14; 17:13; 20:6; 24:18; 30:16,17; 31:8; 35:10; 51:11; 59:19.
  3. Elsewhere in 2 Sam 2:18; Job 24:18; Qoh 9:11; Jer 2:23; 46:6; Lam 4:19; Amos 2:14,15; Joel 4:4.



רָכַב occurs in Isaiah in 19:1; 30:16; 36:8; 58:14. Only in Isa 30:16, 36:8 is the verb used literally of horses. The other two texts use the verb figuratively. In 19:1, Yahweh rides upon a swift cloud and in 58:14, the people ride upon the heights – symbolic of their good fortune. The phrase most similar to v16 is found in Amos 2:15 על-קל נִרְכַּב.

רָדַף occurs in Isa 1:23; 5:11; 17:13; 30:16; 41:3; 51:1. In 17:13, 41:3, Yahweh pursues the enemy and they are scattered like dust or chaff.

### Verse 17

אֶלֶף occurs in Isa 7:23; 30:17; 36:8; 37:36; 60:22. The word normally denotes might and strength since military strength is to be found in numbers. The intention in v17 is to show by the contrast with אָחֵז, the futility of their military might before Yahweh. It takes up the futility of military aid from 30:1-7. Gonçalves [167] notes that the theme of a thousand Israelites punished by a single enemy is present in Deut 32:30. He feels that v17c has been added under the influence of Lev 26:8; Deut 32:30; Josh 23:10 – all texts which show a preference for the numbers contained in this verse. Similarly Evans [98] notes that the idea of the few aided by Yahweh routing the many is taken from the tradition found in Joshua's farewell speech in Josh 23:10.

וַיַּעַר: The verb occurs in Isa 17:13; 54:9 and the noun in 30:17; 50:2; 51:20; 66:15. Yahweh is always the subject or referent; it is he who always

delivers the rebuke (1). In other texts (2), it is a question of a rebuke being delivered from one individual to another. The verb is not used elsewhere of the national threat presented by a foreign army as in Isa 30:17. However, it would be quite in keeping with its use elsewhere if the threat in 30:17 is seen as indirectly coming from Yahweh since, throughout the OT, it is he who rebukes and threatens.

חמש occurs in Isa 19:18; 30:17. The only other place in First Isaiah where the figure five is used is the five cities of Egypt in 19:18.

יָתֵר: The root occurs in Isa 1:8,9; 4:3; 7:22; 30:17. The nearest parallel to 30:17 is 1:8 where the daughter of Zion is left desolate like a booth in a vineyard (niph'al followed by 3 similes, each beginning with יָ). The other instances of the word have to do with the faithful remnant (1:9; 4:3; 7:22).

תָּרֵן occurs in Isa 33:23 and Ez 27:5 where it means "mast". In 30:17, its meaning is clear from its parallel with מֹסֵל.

הָרִי and גִּבְעָה may indirectly refer to Zion especially since both words have the article. הָרִי refers to Zion in 29:8 and 31:4. גִּבְעָה refers to Zion in 10:32 and 31:4 and in 2:2 (Mic 4:1) it refers to the hills above which Mount Zion is raised as the highest (3).

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1. Yahweh is the subject of the verb in Ps 9:6; 68:31; 106:9; 119:21; Jer 29:27; Zech 3:2; Mal 2:3; 3:11. The noun refers to him in 2 Sam 22:16; Job 26:11; Ps 18:16; 76:7; 80:17; 104:7; Job 26:11.
  2. Gen 37:10; Ruth 2:16; Prov 13:1,8; 17:10; Qoh 7:5.
  3. Even though גִּבְעָה occurs often in prophetic literature (11 times in Isaiah; 9 times in Jeremiah; 8 times in Ezekiel; once in Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah) it only refers to Zion in Isa 10:32; 31:4.

ס) occurs most consistently in Isaiah (1) and Jeremiah (2). In Isa 5:26, Yahweh raises a signal for Assyria to approach to punish Judah. A similar idea is found in Jer 4:6,21. In Isa 13:2, Yahweh calls upon Babylon to raise the signal against Assyria. The signal is raised against Babylon in Jer 50:2; 51:12,17. In Isa 18:3, the signal is raised against the Ethiopians. On the other hand, in Isa 11:12; 49:22; 62:10, the signal is raised, not as an act of aggression but of salvation, to gather the peoples and nations together.

In Isa 31:9 the picture of the Assyrian officers deserting the standard before Yahweh contrasts with 5:26 where Assyria is Yahweh's instrument. In its more immediate context, it can be contrasted with the image of Judah left alone like a signal on a hill in 30:17.

## CONTEXT

In v8, it is likely that the suffixes in the forms חָקָה, כְּתִבָּה refer to the message of v1-7 and summarize it. The function of v8 is to draw from v1-7 a religious message that is applicable to future generations. Egypt is no longer of relevance and so fades out of the picture while the relationship of the בָּנִים סוֹרְרִים with Yahweh is further scrutinized. The original oracles of Isaiah in v1-7 are actualized by v8. The attitudes of the leaders in v1-7 should never be forgotten because their attitudes and actions during the Syro-Ephraimite war amounted to disregarding the Torah of Yahweh. The transition from Isaiah's religious interpretation of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis in v1-7 to interpreting the people's attitude in terms of refusing to hear and obey the Torah of Yahweh in v9-17 is made by means of v8 which freezes in history Judah's attitude - while at the same time using vocabulary reminiscent of the Law given

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1. Isa 5:26; 11:12; 13:2; 18:3; 30:17; 31:9; 33:23; 49:22; 62:10.
  2. Jer 4:6,21; 50:2; 51:12,27.

by Yahweh to Moses. In other words, what Yahweh instructs Isaiah to write on a tablet and in a book, namely the lack of trust and faith in Yahweh shown by the Judeans, is the antithesis of what Yahweh wrote on the tablets of stone and what was written in the book of the Law. The details are spelled out in v9-17, the explanation being introduced by כִּי in v9.

V9-10 epitomize the attitude of the wicked: the twofold condemnation summarizes their attitude in ch 28 and ch 29, namely their refusal to hear and inability to see. **לֹא אָבוּ שְׁמוֹעַ** in 30:10 resumes the theme of refusing to hear in ch 28, particularly 28:12 where the same phrase occurs. The theme of their blindness in ch 29 (v7,9,10,11,12) is resumed in 30:10. This explains why the **רָאִים** and **חֲזִים** in v10 appear to play a positive role while the priest and prophet (**כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא**) in 28:7 and the prophets and seers (**נְבִיאִים וְחֲזִים**) in 29:10 play a negative role. In fact, in 30:10, the personage and role of the **רָאִים** and **חֲזִים** are of little importance: the vocabulary has been carefully selected to portray the attitude of the wicked by means of the two roots **רָאָה** and **חָזָה**. The wicked do not want to hear (v9b) and they do not want to see (v10a). The "seers" are to cease their function of "seeing". V12 repeats the theme of refusing to hear the word of Yahweh.

V12 involves an ironic use of vocabulary in the same style as 30:1-5. The root **סָמַח**, used in Isaiah of rejecting evil (7:15,16; 33:15), is now used of rejecting Yahweh. The roots **בָּטַח** and **נִשְׁעַן** often refer to the trust and security found in Yahweh (Isa 12:2; 14:30; 30:15; 32:17,18). As in 28:14-18, 30:1-5, so too in 30:12, trust and security are sought in futile and helpless quarters.

The suddenness of the destruction of the wicked is expressed by the same phrase (פְּתָאם לַפְתָּא) in 30:13 as in 29:5 and the image of the broken vessel in v14 shatters with great finality the image introduced in 29:16.

In v15, Yahweh recommends attitudes which contrast with those of the wicked and proposes a different type of trust (בְּטָח) which is associated with the righteous; but as in v9, they refuse to hear. The image of destruction in v17 which suggests their punishment, contrasts with the image of fruitfulness in v23f which is the reward of those who follow Yahweh's ways.

### Isaiah 30: 18-26

#### INTRODUCTION

There is general consensus that v19-26 come from the post-exilic period, Wildberger [1195] suggesting the fifth century and Kaiser [1974: 301] the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (1). Procksch [394], Kaiser [1974: 298] and Clements [1980a: 250] suggest that v18 is an isolated promise from the hand of a pious redactor; but Kaiser does not rule out the possibility that it may have been composed to act as a transition verse between v17 and v19. The person who wrote v18 regarded the conditions laid down for Yahweh's help in v15 as fulfilled within his community.

Vermeulen [1977: 416], on the other hand, does not see v18 as an isolated promise but sees v18,27-33, as one unit. He argues that the

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1. Kaiser deduces the date from v20b; he sees מוֹרִיךְ as referring to men who because of their eschatological knowledge had positions of teachers in their community. The verb כָּנָף suggests that they were opposed and persecuted - a time in keeping with the policies of Antiochus.

theme of Yahweh rising up (v18) is always linked in the book of Isaiah to the theme of the destruction of nations (2:19; 3:13; 14:22). V19-26 would then have been added later as a commentary on v18. In any case, the majority of commentators agree that v19f assumes the existence of v18 especially in the repetition of the verb הָנִן (1). Kaiser [1974: 300] makes the point that v19-26 may not be a closed unit but may contain later additions; he suggests that v22, the concern with idols, is out of place and attributes it to the Hellenistic period. Likewise he attributes v25b-26 to a later apocalyptic redactor. Vermeylen [1977: 420] and Clements [1980a: 251] suggest that the phrase "the light of seven days" in v26b is a later gloss.

The consensus view that v18-26 and v27-33 are two later additions that have been randomly inserted into the second half of ch 30 by "post-exilic redactors" may be over-simplistic in that it does not do justice either to the structure of ch 30 or to the unit chs 28-33. Likewise, the comparison drawn by many commentators between 29:17-24 and 30:18-26 (Kaiser [1974: 300], Clements [1980a: 249], Wildberger [1192]) may be more apparent than real.

V18 may indeed be a transitional verse as Kaiser [1974: 298] suggests. It contains the first words of any substance spoken by the prophet and reads as his comment or reflection upon the direct words of Yahweh in v15. Yahweh is now in the third person but the addressees in the second person plural are not explicitly identified in v18. "You" in v1-17 are the עַם-מִרְיָ of v9 but it cannot be the עַם-מִרְיָ in the context of v18. Not until v19 are they identified as "the people in Zion who dwell

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1. The fact that הָנִן in v19 does not have Yahweh as subject and v18 does, presupposes that v18 came before v19.

in Jerusalem". The vague "you" in v18 is a transition between עם-מרי in v9 and עם בציון יושב בירושלים in v19. It softens the transition from one to the other. The verse is transitional in that it comes between the theme of condemnation (v1-17) and the theme of promise (v19-33). V18 is not in itself a promise but a condition: Yahweh will help only if the people wait for him. The structure stresses the condition - Yahweh waits for the people if the people wait for him:

יחכה יהוה לחננכם	A
כי אלהי-משפט יהוה	B
אשרי כל-חוכי לו	C

The phrase יהוה משפט יהוה כי holds a very central position in the verse. Clements [1980a: 250] notes that משפט can mean "good order". In this, two phrases can be compared:

כי אלהי-משפט יהוה	30:18
ויסרו למשפט אלהיו יורנו	28:26

The teaching or instructional role of Yahweh may be reflected in this use in v18. חוכה is sometimes used to "wait for" the teaching of Yahweh. It is associated with "sealing the instruction" in Isa 8:17 and in Ps 106:13 it is a station of waiting for his counsel. In Hab 2:3 it concerns waiting for the interpretation of the vision (which constitutes an instruction). The teaching of Yahweh is highlighted in 30:20-21.

## VOCABULARY

Verse 18

חָוִי: The participle is from the root חָוָה and it occurs in Isa 8:17; 30:18; 64:3 (1). The verb means "to wait for". In Psalms, it denotes waiting for Yahweh and in Hab 2:3 waiting for the vision of Yahweh. It is used in Isaiah in the same way as it is in the Psalms. Only in Isa 30:18 is Yahweh the subject of the verb. The phrase לוֹ-חָוִי in v18c corresponds to the phrase .. יְחַכֵּה יְהוָה in v18a.

חָנַן: The root occurs in Isaiah in 26:10; 27:11; 30:18,19; 33:2. It is found only rarely elsewhere in prophetic literature (Jer 22:23; Hos 12:5; Amos 5:15) but it occurs 33 times in the Psalms (2) where the Psalmist implores Yahweh to be gracious to him and to show him his favour. The use of the word in Isaiah particularly in 30:18-19 and 33:2 is similar to its use in Psalms.

רָם: (See 32:15). In Isaiah, the verb refers to the might and power of Yahweh (3) as opposed to the haughtiness and pride of the wicked (4). This reflects the use of the verb in the Psalms where it occurs 48 times. It refers predominantly to Yahweh or to his actions (5) but also to the pride of the wicked (6).

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1. Elsewhere in 2 Kgs 7:9; 9:3; Job 3:21; 32:4; Ps 33:20; 106:13; Dan 12:12; Hos 6:9; Hab 2:3; Zeph 3:8.
  2. Ps 4:6; 6:3; 9:14; 25:16; 26:11; 27:7; 30:9,11; 31:10; 37:21,26; 41:5,11; 51:3; 56:2; 57:2; 59:6; 67:2; 77:10; 86:3,16; 102:14,15; 109:12; 112:5; 119:29, 58, 132; 123:2,3; 142:2.
  3. Isa 6:1; 25:1; 26:11; 30:18; 33:10; 57:14,15.
  4. Isa 2:12,13,14; 10:15,33; 14:13; 37:23.
  5. Ps 5:12; 18:47,49; 21:14; 27:5; 30:2; 34:4; 37:34; 46:11; 57:6; 66:17; 75:7,8,11; 78:69; 89:14,17,18,20,25; 92:11; 99:2,5,9; 107:25,32; 108:6; 110:7; 112:9; 113:4,7; 118:16,18; 138:6; 145:1; 148:14.
  6. Ps 13:3; 18:28; 66:7; 75:5,6; 89:43; 131:1; 140:9.



רחם occurs in Isaiah in 9:16; 13:18; 14:1; 27:11; 30:18; 49:10,13,15; 54:8,10; 55:7; 60:10. In Second Isaiah and in 14:1, it refers to the compassion Yahweh shows to the returning exiles. In 9:16; 27:11, on the other hand, he shows no compassion to the evil-doers or to the wicked. Elsewhere in prophetic literature the root occurs in Jer 12:15; 13:14; 21:7; 30:18; 31:20; 33:26; 42:14; 50:42; Hos 1:6,7; 2:3,6,25; 14:4; Mic 7:19. In the majority of texts, it is Yahweh who announces that he either will or will not show compassion. This is also the case in the Psalms where the word occurs surprisingly seldom (18:2; 102:14; 103:13; 116:5).

משפט echoes the sentiment expressed in 28:26 where Yahweh is a God who keeps things in right order.

אשרי: (See 32:20). The word occurs in Isa 30:18; 56:2 and with the second person plural suffix in 32:20 (1). It occurs nowhere else in prophetic literature. Apart from isolated instances in Deut 33:29; 1 Kgs 10:8; Dan 12:12, its use is confined to the Psalms (2) and Wisdom literature (3).

Its most common occurrence is in the phrase "Happy the man who .." (איש, אנוש, גבר, אדם) (4). Sometimes it is followed by כל + participle (Ps 2:11; 128:1; Isa 30:18) and sometimes by the participle alone (Ps 32:1; 41:2; 84:5; 106:3; 119:1,2; 137:8,9).

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1. In 3:10, Wildberger [1276] follows the suggestion of BHS and reads אשרי for אמרו and so finds another instance of the word.
  2. Ps 1:1; 2:12; 32:1,2; 33:12; 34:9; 40:5; 41:2; 65:5; 84:5,6,13; 89:16; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1,2; 127:5; 128:1,2; 137:8,9; 144:15; 146:5.
  3. Job 5:17; Prov 3:13; 8:32,34; 14:21; 16:20; 20:7; 28:14; 29:28; Qoh 10:17.
  4. Job 5:17; Ps 1:1; 32:2; 34:9; 40:5; 84:6,13; 94:12; 112:1; 127:5; Prov 3:13; 8:34; 28:14; Isa 56:2.

אשרי with a suffix is rare; of the 25 times it is used in Psalms, only in Ps 128:2 does it have a suffix. Three times in Proverbs (14:21; 16:20; 29:18) אשריו occurs at the end of its phrase. In Deut 33:29 and Ecc 10:17, the second person singular suffix is found: in the former אשריך refers to Israel and in the latter אשריך refers to the land. Only in Isa 32:20 is the suffix as well as the participle found.

אשרי denotes a virtue bestowed only upon the righteous; frequently a sharp antithesis between the righteous and the wicked is presented in the immediate background. It is a virtue always associated with Yahweh. In Psalms and Proverbs, it has the force of a moral exhortation and has a conditional sense in that happiness or good fortune is acquired only if one keeps the law (Prov 29:18), observes justice and righteousness (Ps 106:3), fears Yahweh (Prov 28:14) and keeps his ways (Prov 8:32). In 1 Kgs 10, the Queen of Sheba announces that men are happy as a result of hearing the wisdom of Solomon who executes justice and righteousness (v8-10). In Moses's last speech of exhortation he reminds Israel that they are happy because they are a people saved by Yahweh (Deut 33:29).

אשרי therefore often carries a condition: it is an exhortation to be righteous, to trust in Yahweh or to look after the poor and weak. It is associated with wisdom (Prov 3:13; 8:34) or found in wisdom contexts (Ps 1:1; 2:11; 32:1,2; 34:9). It is sometimes associated with prosperity (Ps 1:1; 65:5; 144:15).

In Isa 30:18, אשרי closely resembles the use of the word in Psalms and Proverbs. It is closely associated with Yahweh, offers a moral exhortation and is introduced by the normal formula אשרי כל. At the same time the presence of the second person plural suffixes חוננכם and רחמכם in the same verse addresses the same audience as אשריכם in 32:20.

Most commentators regard v18 as an addition to v17 which has been artificially linked by the awkward לכן. Vermeylen [1977: 416] suggests

that v18 belongs to the same literary layer as v27-33. Kaiser [1974: 298] connects v18 to v15 and suggests that the conditions of v15 have now been fulfilled. Commentators do not connect v18 with 32:20; yet there may be a similarity in both texts. In 30:18, the God of justice is gracious and shows mercy while in 32:20, the spirit is poured upon the people and they receive justice and righteousness and so are blessed.

### Verse 19

עם בציון ישב ביושלים: A similar phrase exists in 10:24 and 28:14. In its immediate context עם בציון opposes the term מרי עם of v9. The verb ישב suggesting rest contrasts with the verbs ירר, הלך in v1. In v19, the rebellious people have heeded the command of Yahweh in v15 to be at rest and this is reflected in the choice of verb, ישב.

בכה: The verb occurs in Isa 16:8; 30:19; 33:7; 38:3 and the noun בכה in 15:2,5; 16:9; 22:4,12; 38:3; 65:19. Elsewhere in prophetic literature it occurs particularly in Jeremiah (1) but also in Ezekiel (2), Hosea (3), Joel (4) and Micah (5). In prophetic literature the act of weeping suggests one of two sentiments: it conveys the brokenheartedness of the people at the destruction of their city or land (6) but it can also convey the wish to repent and come back to Yahweh as in Jer 50:4. In Jer 3:21-23, the faithless sons שובבים בנים weep because they have perverted their ways and so return to Yahweh. In Jer 31:9,15 and in Joel 1:5; 2:12,17,

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1. The verb in Jer 22:10; 31:15; 41:6; 48:32; 50:4; the noun in 3:21; 9:9; 31:9,15,16; 48:5,32.
  2. The verb in Ez 8:14; 24:16,23; 27:31.
  3. Hos 12:5
  4. The verb in Joel 1:5; 2:17; the noun in 2:12.
  5. Mic 1:10.
  6. Isa 15:2,5; 16:9; 22:4; 33:7; 65:19; Jer 9:9; 22:10; 31:15; 48:5,32; Ez 8:14; 27:31; Mic 1:10.

they return to Yahweh with weeping.

In the context of Isa 30:19f, the word denotes the sentiment of repentance. In Isa 38:3, it is difficult to know why Hezekiah weeps so bitterly – is it because he is going to die or because the city is in the hands of the Assyrians? In either case, his tears move Yahweh who answers his prayer. In 38:5, Yahweh hears the prayer of Hezekiah and in 38:19, he hears the cry of the people.

The voice of the people is heard by Yahweh in 30:19 – a contrast to their cry in 29:4 (see קול in 29:4).

זעק: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 19:20; 33:7; 42:2; 46:7; 65:14 and the noun in 5:7. Elsewhere in prophetic literature the verb is restricted to Jeremiah (1). It occurs in the same context as נכה in Isa 33:7; 48:3-5. It denotes the cry of those in distress (2). In Isa 19:20, Yahweh rescues those who cry out to him but in 46:7, even though one may cry out to idols, they cannot help.

ענה: The verb occurs frequently in Isaiah (3). Of all the times it occurs in prophetic literature (4), it is used most consistently in Second Isaiah in contexts where Yahweh answers the people (5) or where the people, in contrast, do not answer Yahweh when he calls (6) or where idols cannot answer (46:7). Isa 30:19 corresponds to those texts in Second

1. Jer 22:20; 25:36; 48:3,5; 49:3,21.

2. Isa 5:7; 33:7; 65:14; Jer 22:20; 25:36; 48:3,21.

3. Isa 3:9; 13:22; 14:32; 21:9; 25:5; 27:2; 30:19; 36:21; 41:17; 46:7; 49:8; 50:2; 58:9; 59:12; 65:12, 24; 66:4.

4. Jer 7:13,27; 11:5; 14:7; 23:25,27; 25:30; 33:3; 35:17; 42:4; 44:15,20; 51:14; Ez 14:4,7; Hos 2:17,23,24; 5:5; 7:10; 14:9; Joel 2:19; Mic 3:4; 6:3,5.

5. Isa 41:17; 49:8; 58:9; 65:24.

6. Isa 50:2; 65:12; 66:4. See Jer 7:13,27; 35:17 for a similar idea.

Isaiah where Yahweh answers the people when they call, particularly the poor and needy (41:17).

The verb occurs over 40 times in the Psalms where the Psalmist prays to Yahweh to answer him (1).

### Verse 20

לחם: Bread as a symbol of hardship and suffering is contrasted in v23 with bread as a symbol of fertility and prosperity.

צַר: (See צָרַר in 28:20 and the noun צָרָה in 30:6). The form צַר occurs chiefly in the Psalms (2) and Job (3) but also in the historical writings (4). In Isaiah the form occurs in late texts (25:4; 26:16; 30:20) and nowhere else in prophetic literature except in Hab 5:15. In all of these texts, the affliction or distress is caused by Yahweh and he is the only one who can alleviate it. The period of distress is interpreted positively as a deserved punishment for sin. In Deut 4:30, the reason why distress comes upon the people is to redirect them to Yahweh and obey his voice (5).

לָחַץ: The root occurs very rarely in prophetic literature; the verb is found only in Isa 19:20 which is late and in Jer 30:20; Amos 6:14. The noun occurs in prophetic literature in Isa 30:20. The verb is found

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1. e.g. Ps 4:2; 13:4; 69:14,17,18; 86:1; 102:3; 119:145; 143:1,7, etc.
  2. Ps 4:2; 31:10; 32:7; 59:17; 66:14; 69:18; 102:3; 106:44; 107:6,13,19,28; 119:143.
  3. Job 7:11; 15:24; 36:16,19; 38:23; 41:7.
  4. Num 22:26; Deut 4:30; Judg 11:7; 1 Sam 2:32; 13:6; 28:15; 2 Sam 1:26; 22:7; 24:16; 2 Chron 15:4.
  5. In 1 Sam 28:15f, Saul finds himself in distress because he did not obey the voice of Yahweh.

mainly in the historical books (1) and rarely in the Psalms (56:2; 106:42). The noun is less common, again found mainly in the historical books (2) and rarely in the Psalms (42:10; 43:2; 44:25)

Isa 19:20; 30:20 follow the same pattern as found in the historical books. When the people cry out to Yahweh, he hears them and delivers them from their oppression, especially the oppression of Egypt (3).

In 1 Kgs 22:27, the king gives instructions that the prophet Micaiah is to be seized and given only לחץ לחץ, לחץ לחץ which in the context must mean "meagre", "scarce".

לחץ belongs to the same semantic field as צר and both words are found together in Num 22:25-26; Job 36:15; Ps 106:42-44.

as a verb  
כִּנְף is a hapax.

מִרְיָהּ refers back to תִּזְרָה in v9 and so an emendation to מִרְיָהּ "early rain" [Clements 1980a: 250] is not necessary in the context.

The motif of eyes seeing and ears hearing takes up the theme found in 29:18 and anticipates that of 32:3.

### Verse 21

וְרָבָה: The people hear the word which they formerly rejected in v12.

וְרָבָה: The people are more inclined to follow the way which they formerly rejected in v10-11.

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1. Ex 3:9; 22:20; 23:9; Num 22:25; Judg 1:34; 2:18; 4:3; 6:9; 10:12; 1 Sam 10:18; 2 Kgs 6:32; 13:4,22.
  2. Ex 3:9; Deut 26:7; 1 Kgs 22:27; 2 Kgs 13:4.
  3. Ex 3:9; Judg 2:18; 4:3; 10:12; 1 Sam 10:18.

תִּשְׁמְאוּ: The two hiphils always occur in parallel. They are only found in the historical books (Gen 13:9; 2 Sam 14:19; 1 Chron 12:2) and in two late prophetic texts, Isa 30:21 and Ez 21:21. The words are used metaphorically in two texts: 2 Sam 14:19 and Isa 30:21 - in both instances it is a question of deviating from an instruction: in the first instance, from the word of the king and in the second from the word of Yahweh.

### Verse 22

טָמֵא: The verb "to become unclean" is characteristic of Leviticus and Numbers where it appears some 50 and 16 times respectively. In prophetic literature it occurs in Isaiah only in 30:22 but it is found in Jeremiah (2:7,23; 7:30; 32:34), Hosea (5:3; 6:10; 9:14) and particularly Ezekiel where it appears some 30 times. In prophetic literature especially in Ezekiel it is idols that make one unclean and it is this context in which the word appears in Isaiah.

פְּסִילִים occurs frequently in Second Isaiah (1) and in 3 late texts in First Isaiah, 10:10; 21:9; 30:22 - passages which are all concerned with the condemnation of idols. Although the word appears in Jeremiah (8:19; 10:14; 50:38; 51:17,22), it is also found in the Pentateuch and the historical writings (2).

צַפְנִי: Apart from Isa 30:22, it is found only in Ex 38:17,19 and Num 17:3,4.

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1. Isa 40:19,20; 42:8,17; 45:20; 44:9,10,15; 48:5.
  2. Once in Exodus, 7 times in Deuteronomy, 10 times in Judges, 4 times in 2 Chronicles.

זהב, כסף: The theme of discarding idols of silver and gold is resumed in 31:6.

אפרת: This construct form is found in Ex 28:8; 39:5; Isa 30:22. In Exodus it suggests something skillfully created by the hand of man - in the case of Isa 30:22, idols.

מסכה: The presence of the word may indicate that מסכה in v1c has been interpreted in the sense of idolatry.

תזרם from the root זרה occurs in Isaiah in 30:22,24; 41:16. In 30:23, 41:16, the word is used as part of the threshing image and means "to winnow", a meaning attested elsewhere (Ruth 3:2; Jer 4:11; 15:7).

רוה is an unusual word. In Lev 15:33; 20:18 it means "unclean" and in Lam 1:13; 5:17 it means "sick". Isa 30:22 with its context of idolatry suggests that it has the nuance "unclean".

תאמר: The attitude conveyed by the words spoken to the idols acts as a corrective to the words, introduced by אמר, spoken against Yahweh in v10 and v16.

### Verse 23

מטר: In Isaiah the verb occurs in 5:6 and the noun in 4:6; 5:6; 30:23. Throughout the OT, the root both as a verb and as a noun signifies either a blessing or a curse from Yahweh. As a curse, Yahweh can send



either torrential rain or alternatively withhold the rain (1). As a blessing Yahweh can send rain to water the earth and make it fruitful (2). The blessing of rain is related to obeying the word of Yahweh (Deut 11:13f; 28:12f). In 1 Kgs 8:36, it is related to the teaching of Yahweh and the right way in which the people should walk.

Particularly interesting is Deut 32:2, the last words of Moses, and 2 Sam 23:4, the last words of David. In the first text, the teaching **אמרה** **לקח**, of Yahweh is described as gentle rain upon the grass. In the second text, the era of a good king's reign is compared to rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

In Isaiah the command of Yahweh to withhold rain from the vineyard in 5:6 contrasts with the way in which he sends rain to produce crops in 30:23. The only other occurrence of the word in Isaiah in 4:6 constitutes a gloss but the verse has similarities with 32:2 (see 32:2).

**זרע**: The activity of sowing under the approving eye of Yahweh resumes the theme found in 28:24.

**ארמה** in First Isaiah denotes the land in general in 6:11; 7:16; 14:1,2; 19:17; 23:17; 24:21. In 28:24, 30:23,24; 32:13, it denotes specifically the soil in which seed is planted. Thus 28:24 and 30:23 are connected by both **זרע** and **ארמה**.

**תבואה** occurs in prophetic literature in Isa 23:3; 30:23; Jer 2:3; 12:13; Ez 48:18. It occurs much more frequently in the Pentateuch and historical

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1. Gen 7:4; 19:24; Ex 9:18,23,33,34; 16:4; 1 Sam 12:17,18; 1 Kgs 17:1; Job 20:23; Ez 38:22; Amos 4:7.
  2. Gen 2:5; Deut 11:11,14,17; 28:12; 32:2; 2 Sam 23:4; 1 Kgs 8:36; 18:1; Job 5:10; 28:28; 29:23; 36:27; 37:6; Ps 11:6; 72:6; 78:24,27; 135:7; 147:8.

books (1). It also occurs in Wisdom literature (2). The word is connected with laws and festivals (7 times in Lev 25) and the harvest is often seen as a blessing from Yahweh (Lev 19:25; 25:20; Deut 16:15; 33:14).

רָשָׁן: The verb occurs in Isa 34:6; the adjective in Isa 30:23 (3). The root means "to make fat" and is used metaphorically to describe the fertility which comes as a blessing from Yahweh e.g. Ps 23:5. In Deut 31:20, however, a passage which has similarities with Isa 30:10-11, it is when the people have grown fat from the fertility of the land that they turn to other gods. Only in Isa 30:23 and Ps 23:5 are the words רָשָׁן and שָׂמַן found together.

שָׂמַן: In Isaiah the verb occurs in 6:10 and the noun in 30:23 (4). The verb is always used metaphorically to denote an ignoring of or rebelling against the word of Yahweh. The noun, like רָשָׁן often denotes a blessing from Yahweh.

רָעָה: In Isaiah the verb occurs in 5:17; 14:30; 27:10; 30:23; 38:12; 40:11; 44:20; 61:5; 65:25. The noun מְרֵעָה "pasture" occurs in 32:14 and the noun רֹעֶה "shepherd" in 13:20; 31:4; 44:28; 56:11; 63:11. The verb is used

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1. Gen 47:24; Ex 23:10; Num 18:30; Lev 19:25; 23:29; 25:3,7,12,15,16,21,22; Deut 14:22,28; 16:15; 22:9; 26:12; 33:14; Josh 5:12; 2 Kgs 8:6; 2 Chron 31:5; 32:28.
  2. Job 31:12; Ps 107:37; Prov 3:9,14; 8:19; 10:16; 14:4; 15:6; 16:8; 18:20; Qoh 5:9.
  3. Elsewhere the verb occurs in Deut 31:20; Prov 11:25; 13:4; 15:30; 28:25; Ps 20:4; 23:5. The adjective in Ps 22:30; 92:15; the noun in Judg 9:9; Job 36:16; Ps 36:9; 63:6; 65:12.
  4. Elsewhere the verb occurs in Deut 32:15; Neh 9:25; Jer 5:28; the verb in Ex 34:16; Num 13:20; Judg 3:29; Neh 9:25,35; 1 Chron 4:40; Ez 34:14; Hab 1:16.

metaphorically in 14:30 where the firstborn of the poor will feed in safety. Although it does not have a metaphorical use in other texts, it does, however, seem to suggest an image of desolation or the opposite, prosperity. In 5:17; 27:10; 32:14, the site is so ruined it becomes a pasture but the opposite is the case in 30:23.

מִקְנִים is found most often in the Pentateuch (1). In prophetic literature it occurs in Isa 30:23; Jer 9:9; 49:32; Ez 38:12,13.

כֶּרֶם-נֶרְחָב is an unusual phrase. The word כֶּרֶם is found in the singular in 30:23 and in the plural in Ps 65:14. The niphal of נֶרְחָב is found only in 30:23.

#### Verse 24

אֵלֶּף occurs rarely in the OT (2). In Deuteronomy 28, the increase of cattle is a blessing dependant upon hearing the word of Yahweh.

עִירִים: The function of the asses has changed from v6, reflecting the turn around in the attitude of the people from the earlier part of the chapter.

V24 contains unusual vocabulary. בִּלְלִי is only found in Job 6:5; 24:6 and Isa 30:23. חֲמֶץ and רֶחֶת are hapax legomena.

#### Verse 25

The repetition of the nouns גִּבְעָה, הָר reverses the image of desolation associated with the hill and mountain in v17. The adjective

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1. 25 times in Genesis; 12 times in Exodus; 7 times in Numbers.
  2. Deut 7:13; 28:4,18,51; Ps 8:8; 50:10; Prov 14:4; Isa 30:24.

נשאה contrasts with the verb נפל at the end of the verse which depicts the fall of all external threats.

פלגים occurs in Isa 30:25 and 32:2. The phrase פלג-מים is found in Ps 1:3; 65:10; 46:5; Prov 5:16; 21:1. An image, similar to Isa 30:25, occurs in Ps 65:10 where Yahweh waters the earth (1). In Prov 21:1, the heart of the king is a stream of water in the hand of Yahweh. In Ps 1:3, the wise man is compared to a tree planted beside streams of water (2).

The phrase בלי-מים occurs only in Isa 30:25 and in 44:4 where it also expresses a reversal in fortunes where Yahweh can cause streams of water to spring up in the barren desert.

הרג occurs frequently in Isaiah (10:4; 14:19,20,30; 22:13; 26:21; 27:1,7). The noun occurs in Isa 30:25 (3). Yahweh is often the subject of the verb, against Israel in 10:4; against Babylon in 14:19,20; against Philistia in 14:30; against Leviathan in 27:1.

מגדלים occurs in Isa 2:15; 5:2; 30:25; 33:18. In all texts the towers, built for protection (5:2; 33:18), thus sometimes a source of pride (2:15), are as nothing before Yahweh.

### Verse 26

אור occurs 7 times in First Isaiah (4) and 11 times in Second Isaiah (5).

1. LXX translates פלג as ποταμός only in Ps 65:10 and Isa 32:2.
2. Sheppard [1980: 143] suggests that the wise and wisdom's fruition is described in terms of earthly vegetation. He offers Sir 24:12-17 and Ps 1 as examples.
3. Elsewhere in Josh 27:7; 30:25; Esth 9:5; Prov 24:11; Jer 7:32; 12:3; 19:6; Ez 26:15; Zech 11:4,7.
4. Isa 2:5; 5:20,30; 9:1; 10:17; 13:10; 30:26.
5. Isa 42:6,16; 49:6; 51:4; 58:8,10; 59:9; 60:1,3,19,20.

החמה, הלבנה are not the normal words for sun and moon which more commonly are הירח, השמש. They are poetic words: הלבנה is found in Cant 6:10 and Isa 24:23 and 30:26. החמה is found in Cant 6:10; Job 30:28; Ps 19:7; Isa 24:23; 30:26. Isa 24:23 refers to Yahweh's final victory on Mt Zion when the sun and moon will be confounded. In Isa 13:11 the obscuring of the sun and moon is part of the Day of Yahweh imagery. By contrast, in 30:26, the light of the sun will be sevenfold.

שבעתים occurs in prophetic literature only in Isa 30:26 (1). In Enoch 91:16; Jub 1:29; 19:25, a sevenfold increase of light is expected. Clements [1980a: 251] notes that concern with light became a popular theme in later Jewish apocalyptic imagery.

חבש occurs in Isaiah in 1:6; 3:7; 30:26; 61:1. Isa 30:26 presents a contrast to 1:6 where there is no healing for the people's wounds and bruises.

שבר takes up and reverses the message conveyed by the shattering of the vessel in v17-18.

רפא occurs in Isa 6:10; 19:22; 30:26; 53:5; 57:18,19. Isa 6:10, where the stubborn people will not turn to be healed by Yahweh, contrasts with 19:22 where the Egyptians cry out to Yahweh and are healed and with 30:26 where Yahweh heals the wound of the people after they turn to him and walk in his way (v20-22).

מחץ is a hapax.

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1. Elsewhere in Gen 4:15,24; Ps 12:7; 79:12; Prov 6:31.

מָכַתוּ occurs in Isa 1:6; 10:26; 14:6; 27:7; 30:26 and the verb in 30:21. In all cases, it refers to the punishment Yahweh has brought upon Israel.

## CONTEXT

Many of the sentiments expressed in v1-17 are reversed in v19-26, reflecting the dichotomy between the evil and the righteous. While the evil are an עַם מְרִי in v9, the just are addressed as עַם בְּצִיּוֹן in v19. In v20, the righteous recognize Yahweh as their teacher (מוֹרִיךְ) while in v9 the evil refuse to hear the תּוֹרָה. The righteous both see (רָאָה v20) and hear (שָׁמַע v21) unlike the evil who neither see nor hear. The just follow Yahweh's paths (דֶּרֶךְ v21) unlike the wicked (v11). The abandonment of idols (v22) may refer back to the same word (מַסַּכָּה) in v1. In v24, the function of the asses is different: they are now עֲבָרֵי-הָאָרֶמֶת symbolizing the prosperity and peace of the land whereas in v6 they are employed to carry the wealth out of the land in an effort to elicit help from Egypt. The image of the fertile hill and mountain in v25 contrasts with the desolate hill and mountain in v17. The theme of the just being rewarded in terms of the produce of the land (v23-25) resumes the theme found in 28:23-29; 29:14. Yahweh heals the fracture (שָׁבַר) of the just in v27 but breaks (שָׁבַר) the wicked in v14.

A reversal of fortunes takes place in 30:19-26 as it does in 29:17-24. The same procedure may be at work in both chapters, i.e. the picking up of key words from their previous sections and building up a positive picture from this vocabulary. But there the similarity ceases. Isa 30:19-26 is quite unlike 29:17-24; it shares no vocabulary except common words such as שָׁמַע, בִּיזוֹם הָהוּא, רָאָה. 29:17-24 concentrates on people as individuals while 30:19-26 concentrates on the people as a group and

particularly on the land and is concerned with Zion and Jerusalem (v19), with idols (v22), with cosmic changes (25-26) - none of which are mentioned in 29:17-24.

It is with ch 31 that 30:19-26 has more in common. In ch 31, the theme of Zion occurs in v4,5,9b; the theme of idols in v7; the destruction of Assyria in v8.

Certain factors militate against treating v19-26,27-33 as two separate self-contained units of material:

- (a) The passage v18-33 is unified in that the material comes from the mouth of the prophet; Yahweh is always referred to in the third person singular and the people to whom v18-33 is addressed are the people of Jerusalem (v19,29).
- (b) The great slaughter in v25 suggests that the theme of the destruction of foreign nations is already intruding into v19-26 and is not restricted to v27-33.
- (c) V19-33 may be treated as a composite unit because it is unlikely that either v19-26 or v27-33 constituted two distinct units in themselves, i.e. both sections show signs of being added to, e.g. v22 may have been added as an interpretation of how one walks in the way. As commentators note [Clements 1980a: 251], v25-26 may also be an addition - both verses are introduced by וְהָיָה, a commonly recognized redactional beginning. V29 and v33 also show signs of being inserted later. So there are too many later additions in each section to argue for two original distinct units.
- (d) V23-25 offer agricultural images which are not present in v19-22 and so introduce new ideas into the passage. V26 introduces cosmic considerations which are present neither in v19-22 nor in v23-25.

It is more effective and offers richer possibilities of interpreting v19-33 as an integral part of ch 30 if v19-33 is treated as a composite unit rather than two separate units of material inserted into the end of the chapter. It should be treated as a composite unit because there is no clear evidence of a single editor at work. Rather the context proved suitable for the introduction of various related themes and any redactional seams have now disappeared. In other words, it cannot be said that the final redaction of v19-33 reveals a single conscious consistent editing. V18-33 offered a context where various authors felt free to include their own preoccupations ( idols, fertility of the land, cosmic events, liturgical feasts, final onslaught on the nations) which reflected the way, they felt, best expressed a reversal of the situation in v1-17.

Isaiah 30: 27-33

## INTRODUCTION

Four main positions are adopted with regard to the origin of these verses.

- (a) Wildberger [1211] after some hesitation finally ascribes the passage to the prophet Isaiah, his guiding principle being that no one can actually prove that it does not come from him. The reference to Assyria shows that Isaiah had the Assyrian empire in mind. He does, however, concede that v29 and v32 are later additions.
- (b) Barth [102], followed by Clements [1980a: 252], sees the passage as coming from the AR editors of the last half of the seventh century. In this case, as in the position of Wildberger, the mention of Assyria should be interpreted as the historical pre-exilic empire. The primary message of the AR is that Yahweh would appear in great power to punish the Assyrians and heap utter destruction and terror upon them. The emphasis throughout the AR is upon the manner of the overthrow



of the Assyrians which will be brought about by the direct and personal action of Yahweh unassisted by man. A recurrent feature of this edition is the extensive use of words, images and themes from Isaianic sayings but applied in a different way. However, the mention of Assyria in v31 is too small a premise upon which to base all the claims that Barth makes about the section, in particular his assertion that the section refers to the historical Assyria [101-03]. In v28 other nations and peoples, and not Assyria alone, are subjects of Yahweh's wrath. The presence of Assyria in v31 may have more to do with the theme of reversal of Judah's fate than with a consistent editing of the entire book in an anti-Assyrian light. Barth is not alone in pointing out the anthological nature of the passage particularly its vocabulary links with ch 10; almost all the commentaries allude to it. But it is not only the role of Assyria that is reversed; it is the position of Israel that is most drastically changed.

- (c) Vermeylen [1977: 416] sees v18,27-33 as an eschatological *relecture* from the first half of the fifth century. In this the "rising" (רם) of Yahweh holds a central position (2:10; 2:19; 13:13; 31:2; 33:10). The salvation of Israel is conceived of in terms of a liberation from the oppression of the nations (3:13; 13:1-22). V27-33 does not explain and complete v18-26 as Marti [227] suggested. Rather v19-26 interprets and completes v18. Vermeylen helps to balance Barth's view in that the fate of many nations is contemplated and not just Assyria and secondly the emphasis on the destruction of the nations is simply another expression of the certainty of Israel's salvation.
- (d) Kaiser [1974: 305] sees Assyria as referring to the Seleucid kingdom of the second century - thus placing the passage in a very late period. Kaiser's view is that Assyria is used here symbolically and that it does not refer to the historical pre-exilic empire. It is possible that it constitutes a kind of literary *reprise*, the purpose of which is to unite ch 30 with earlier sections of the book. In other words, like much of the vocabulary in the passage the theme of Assyria is only one aspect among many that is picked up to show that a complete reversal has taken place. Consequently, "Assyria" in ch 30 need

not be given a rigid historical identity.

A superficial look at v27-33 reveals an *inclusio* in v27-28 and v33. V27 apparently opens a new section with הנה. In v27 שם-יהוה corresponds to נשמת-יהוה in v33. The *inclusio* is compounded by the occurrence of כנחל שוטף in v28 and כנחל גפרית in v33. The words אש, בער also appear in both v27 and 33.

The section v27-33 seems unified in 3 ways:

- (a) By an emphasis on the attributes of Yahweh: his name, anger, lips, tongue, spirit, voice, strength, rod, stick, breath.
- (b) By a series of images and similes to do with fire that dramatically denote the seriousness of Yahweh's anger:

בער אפו  
כבר משאה  
כאש אכלה  
להב אש אכלה  
תפתה  
מדרתה  
אש ועצים  
כנחל גפרית  
בער

- (c) By a series of images to do with the storm that denotes his strength:

כנחל שוטף  
נפץ  
זרם  
אבן-ברר

Yahweh is the absolute subject and agent of the action in v27-33. For this reason v29 seems a little incongruous; the theme of joy and gladness hardly fits into the picture. It is important to stress that the feast and pilgrimage to Jerusalem are only similes and so a real feast

such as the Passover is not in question here. The second person plural suffix in v29 must be taken as "the people of Zion who dwell in Jerusalem" in v19. The theme of the fury of Yahweh and the joy of the people do not merge until v23 with the phrase "timbrels and lyres"; a verse which ensures a tenuous unity between the two themes.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 27

שם-יהוה: The phrase is particularly common in Second Isaiah (1) but occurs also in First Isaiah (2). It is synonymous with strength and power and is something that can be relied upon. It normally occurs in the context of protection - here in the context of the protection of Zion against her enemies. Duhm [201], Fohrer [1967a: 110] and Wildberger [1207] delete שם as "an obvious Deuteronomic theologoumenon". Wildberger [1201] translates "see Yahweh coming" (along the lines of Deut 33:2; Ps 96:13; 98:9; Isa 26:21; 40:10; 66:15; Hab 3:3).

מרחק occurs most often in Isaiah (3). Sometimes it is the enemy that comes from afar to threaten Israel as in Isa 10:3; 17:13; Jer 4:16; 5:15; but in Isa 30:27 it is Yahweh himself who comes to destroy the nations. Watts [405] notes that a theophany usually indicates where Yahweh comes from: Sinai in Deut 33:2; Seir in Judg 5:4; Teman in Hab 3:3; the heavens in Ps 18:10; 144:5; Isa 26:21; 63:19; Jer 25:30; Ps 18:10; 144:5; Mic 1:3; Zion in Ps 56:2; Amos 1:2. It is "from Zion" that Barth [98]

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1. Isa 41:25; 42:8; 43:7; 44:5; 48:2,9; 50:10; 51:15; 52:5,6; 54:5; 57:15; 63:12,14,16,19; 64:1,6; 65:1; 66:5.
  2. Isa 12:4; 18:7; 24:15; 25:1; 26:8,13; 29:23; 30:27.
  3. Isa 8:9; 10:3; 13:5; 17:13; 30:27; 33:17; 40:11. Elsewhere it occurs in 2 Sam 15:17; Ps 138:6; Prov 25:25; 31:14; Jer 4:16; 5:15; 6:20; 8:19; 31:10; Zech 10:9.

opts for in the present text.

בַּעַר: In First Isaiah the word is always used in the context of punishment or destruction, normally referring to Israel (1:31; 4:4; 5:5; 6:13; 9:17; 10:17) but also to Edom (34:9) and to the nations in general (30:27).

אף means "nostril" but also "anger". It is used of the anger of Yahweh in First Isaiah in 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:4,5,25; 12:1; 13:3,9,13; 30:27,30. His anger is directed against Israel in 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:4; 12:1. Only later is it directed against Assyria in 10:25 and against Babylon in 13:3. It is directed against the earth in general in 13:13 and against the nations in 30:27,30. Only in Isa 30:27 does the phrase אָפוּ בַּעַר occur.

כִּבְר מִשְׁאָה: If this phrase expresses an image such as a cloud of smoke, then it is a hapax. Some commentators, notably Wildberger [1208], opt for the meaning "burden". If this is so, then it is the third time the root appears in ch 30 (see v6). Irwin [97] repeats a suggestion made earlier by Hummel [100] who proposed emending the MT to וְכִבְרוּ-ם שְׁאָה (adding a ך parallel to אָפוּ and separating the enclitic ם and reading ש as ש) and translates "his liver raging". Sasson [91] follows Ibn Ezra who compares מִשְׁאָה to הַמִּשְׁאָה in Judg 20:40, suggesting that it means "smoke". He refers to a similar word (מִשְׁאָה) in the Lachish Letters (IV:10) which he translates as "smoke-signals". He translates כִּבְר מִשְׁאָה in v27 "heavy with a column of smoke" and compares the picture of Yahweh to a mythical dragon in Job 41:19-21.

שִׁפְתָיו in First Isaiah is normally found in the context of speech (1). The text closest to the word in 30:27 is 11:4 where the anointed of Yahweh will slay the wicked with the breath of his lips.

זַעַם, often synonymous with אַף is nearly always associated with the wrath of Yahweh (2). In Isaiah, his anger has ceased against Israel (10:25) and is turned against Babylon (13:5) when Yahweh comes to destroy the whole earth.

לִשְׁוֹן in First Isaiah always refers to speech (3). Only in 30:27 does it occur in the context of the wrath of Yahweh.

אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת takes up the image associated with Yahweh in 29:6.

### Verse 28

רוּחַ within chs 28-33 has the power to save or destroy (see 28:6; 29:10; 32:15).

נָחַל in First Isaiah usually refers to a specific river (11:15; 15:7; 27:12; 34:9). In 35:6 it reflects a theme similar to that found in Second Isaiah where waters break out in the wilderness. The word occurs twice in ch 30 in v27 and v33 - both times it forms a dramatic simile and is employed to show the extent of Yahweh's anger.

The phrase כִּנְחַל שׁוּטָף can be compared to the vocabulary of 28:15 where the Judeans were overwhelmed by the waters: now it is used to destroy

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1. 6:5,7; 19:18; 28:11; 29:13; 33:19; 36:5.

2. Ps 38:4; 69:25; 78:49; 102:11; Isa 10:25; 13:5; 26:20; 30:27; Jer 10:10; 30:27; 50:25; Lam 2:6; Ez 22:24,31.

3. Isa 3:8; 28:11; 32:4; 33:19; 35:6.

the nations.

צואר occurs in First Isaiah in 8:8; 10:27; 30:28. The text closest to 30:28 is 8:8 where the waters which Yahweh will bring against "this people" will overflow and reach up to their very neck. In 30:28, a reversal takes place; now it is the foreign nations and not Judah that feel the brunt of Yahweh's anger.

חצה: The basic meaning of the word is "to divide" (1). It occurs only once in Isaiah.

הנף: The polel occurs in Isa 10:22 and the hiphil in 10:15; 11:15; 13:2; 19:16; 30:28. תנופה occurs in 19:16 and 30:32. It refers to the action of Yahweh against the sea of Egypt in 11:15. In the simile in 10:15 it indirectly refers to Yahweh and to the threatening hand of Yahweh in 19:16. נפת is a hapax but from the same root.

נאום resumes the struggle against the nations introduced in 29:7,8.

נשוא occurs in Isa 1:13; 5:18; 30:28. In Isa 1:13; 5:18, it has the connotation of something false and insincere, e.g. offerings in 1:13. This is also the case in the Psalms where the word occurs 14 times (2) and refers to the falsehood of the wicked. In Ezekiel where the word occurs 8 times (3), it refers to the illusions of the false prophets.

נשן occurs in Isa 30:28 and in Job 30:11; 41:5; Ps 32:9. In Ps 32:9, the

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1. Gen 32:8; 33:1; Ex 21:35; Num 31:27,42; Judg 7:16; 9:43; 2 Kgs 2:8,14; Job 40:30; Ps 55:24; Ez 37:22; Dan 11:4.
  2. Ps 12:3; 24:4; 26:4; 31:7; 41:7; 60:13; 89:48; 108:13; 119:37; 127:1,2; 139:20; 144:8,11.
  3. Ez 12:24; 13:6,7,8,9,23; 21:28,34.

de is used as an image to suggest the restraint Yahweh has to put on his people to ensure that they follow his instruction and teaching.

מ comes from the root תעה which, in the context of chs 28-33, has to do with lack of wisdom and insight (see 28:7 and 29:24). A similar notion is conveyed by the word in 3:12; 9:15; 19:14; 35:8.

occurs in 30:28 and in 50:6.

V27-28 resemble most in vocabulary 10:25; 11:4; 13:3,5 - texts that deal with the destruction of Assyria, Babylon and the wicked in general and not Assyria alone. This weakens the argument put forward by Barth [2] and Clements [252] that v27-28 address the historical Assyria specifically.

#### verse 29

ש occurs in Isaiah in 5:1; 23:15,16; 24:9; 26:1; 30:29; 42:10. It occurs 42 times in the Psalms, often as part of the Psalm title (1). It is with the use of the word in the Psalter that Isa 30:29 is to be compared. The word occurs as a title in Isa 5:1; 26:1.

התקדש: The word קדש is normally found in the Pentateuch; in Isaiah, it is found in 29:1 and 30:29. The verb קדש (see 29:23) is not the normal verb used to express the observance of a feast.

שםחת ל: The phrase is found in Ps 4:8 and Deut 28:17. In the latter context, the people are chided because they did not serve Yahweh in

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e.g. Ps 121:1; 122:1; 130:1; 131:1; 133:1.

joyfulness and gladness of heart. The joy of the righteous resumes the joy of the ענוים in 29:19.

הולך: The movement of the righteous in going to the mountain of Yahweh contrasts with movement of those in 30:2 who go away from Yahweh by going to Egypt.

חליל is rare in the OT. Apart from Isa 5:12; 30:29 it occurs in the singular in 1 Sam 10:5; 1 Kgs 1:40 and in the plural in Jer 48:36. The sound of the flute at the feast in 30:29, used in the service of Yahweh contrasts with the hedonistic pleasures associated with it in 5:12.

הר יהוה: This is the first of the three occurrences of the word הר explicitly associated with Zion and Yahweh and may anticipate 31:4.

אלהי-ישראל occurs in 2 Sam 23:3 where it is a synonym for צור-ישראל. The word צור occurs often in Isaiah (1) and particularly in the Psalms (2) where it is used to describe Yahweh or associated with the security that he represents.

### Verse 30

קול: The voice of Yahweh is now more dramatic than in his speeches in v1-17. The hiphil of שמע does not allow the choice of hearing or not hearing that it does in v9b (לא אבו-שמוע).

הור occurs in Isaiah only in 30:30. It reflects the use of the word in the

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1. Isa 2:10,18,21; 8:14; 17:10; 26:4; 30:29; 44:8; 48:21; 51:1.
  2. Ps 18:3,31,47; 27:5; 28:1; 31:3; 61:3; 62:3,7,8; 71:3; 73:26; 78:15,20,35; 89:27,44; 92:16; 94:22; 95:1; 105:41; 114:8; 144:1.



Psalms where it is always associated with the glory and majesty of Yahweh (1).

זרוע occurs 4 times in First Isaiah (9:19; 17:5; 30:30; 33:2) but two of these texts (30:30; 33:2) fall easily into the pattern of the word in Second Isaiah (2) where it is consistently used to denote the might and power of Yahweh.

נחת: In v15, the root is used in the context of salvation but here it denotes destruction. The form נחת is restricted to wisdom literature (3). Good [154] rejects the translation "his descending arm" for נחת זרועו and suggests that the context demands the sense "the strength of his arm". He associates the phrase with 2 Sam 22:35 where he takes the piel of נחת to mean "to give (military) assistance to" and translates "he strengthens my arm with a bronze bow". He translates the verb in Ez 30:24: "I have put my sword in his hand" which has the idea of giving help to. In addition, he cites four Ugaritic texts to show that in Ugaritic a verb *nht* existed with the meaning "to be strong": it is this verb, Good claims, that is present in Isa 30:30 and 2 Sam 22:35.

זעף is only found in 30:30 in Isaiah. In Jonah 1:15, it refers to the raging of the sea; but in other texts, it refers to the anger of a king (Prov 19:12), in particular Asa (2 Chron 16:10), Uzziah (2 Chron 26:19) and Yahweh (2 Chron 28:9; Isa 30:30; Mic 7:9).

אש אוכלת takes up the phrase from 29:6. Sekine [63] notes the similarity with בלהב-אש in 66:15 and other contacts between the vocabulary of 30:27-33 and 66:14-16.

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1. *Ps.* 8:2; 21:6; 45:4; 96:6; 104:1; 111:3; 145:5.

2. Isa 40:10,11; 48:14; 51:9; 52:10; 53:1; 59:16; 62:8; 63:5,12.

3. Job 17:16; 36:16; Prov 29:9; Qoh 4:6; 6:5; 9:17.

נפץ in 30:30 is a hapax. The verb occurs in 27:9 and 33:3 – in the latter it refers to "a thunderous noise" – a similar idea to the noun in 30:30.

זרם, ברר: The natural elements used to destroy Ephraim in 28:2, are now turned against the nations.

### Verse 31

V31 stresses the reaction of Assyria to the voice of Yahweh.

חָתַת occurs most frequently in prophetic literature especially in Isaiah (1) and Jeremiah (2) and in Ez 2:6; 3:9; Mal 2:5; Ob 9. Elsewhere it is restricted mainly to the historical writings (3).

Sometimes the verb literally means "to break" (4) Often it is associated with Yahweh: it occurs in the phrase "do not fear" where Yahweh assures his people of his presence, particularly in battle (5). An action which has been supported by Yahweh often causes fear and terror (6). The verb does not express fear before an animal except in Isa 31:4 (7).

Within chs 28-33, the verb occurs in 30:31 and 31:4,9. In 30:31 and 31:9, Yahweh inspires fear and terror in Assyria and the enemies of Zion.

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1. Isa 7:8; 8:9; 10:2; 14:4; 17:18; 23:4; 30:10; 46:5,27; 48:20,39; 49:37; 50:2; 51:56.
  2. Jer 1:17; 8:9; 10:2; 14:4; 17:18; 23:4; 30:10; 46:5,27; 48:20,39; 49:37; 50:2; 51:56.
  3. Deut 1:21; 31:8; 1 Sam 2:4,10; 17:11; 2 Kgs 19:26; 1 Chron 22:13; 28:20; 20:15,17; Josh 1:9; 8:1; Job 7:14; 32:15; 37:34; 39:22.
  4. 1 Sam 2:14; Isa 7:8; Jer 51:56.
  5. Deut 1:21; 31:8; Josh 1:9; 8:1; 1 Chron 28:20; 2 Chron 20:15,17; Isa 51:7; Jer 1:17; 10:2; 23:4; 30:10; 46:27; Ez 2:6; 3:9.
  6. 1 Sam 2:10; 2 Kgs 19:26; Isa 8:9; 20:5; 30:31; 31:9; 37:27; Jer 8:9; 14:4; 17:18; 46:5; 48:20; 48:39; 49:37. In the last text, the phrase הַבְּאֵתִי רָעָה is similar to the phrase in Isa 31:2a.
  7. Job 39:22 describes the fearlessness of the horse.

Yahweh, on the other hand, is not daunted or scared by the shouts of those who mass against Zion.

ו: (See under מטה in v32).

ו occurs in First Isaiah in 1:5; 5:25; 9:12; 10:20,24; 11:4,15; 14:6,29; 27:7; 31; 37:36,38 and in Second Isaiah in 49:10; 50:6; 53:4; 57:17; 58:4; 60:10; 3. It means "to smite" or "to strike in punishment". In 1:5; 5:12; 9:12; 7, it describes how Yahweh once smote the people of Israel in punishment but this perspective changes. In 10:20 Yahweh changes from a one that smote them to the Holy One of Israel in truth. The Assyrians who lifted up the rod of punishment on Yahweh's behalf, will themselves be destroyed in 10:24. Babylon too, which smote with blows, will be destroyed in 14:6,29. Isa 30:31 contains the same theme as 10:2, namely how Yahweh will punish the Assyrians.

ו has already occurred in v26 where Yahweh bound up the wounds "inflicted" by the blow. So a complete reversal has taken place. Formerly Yahweh used Assyria to smite Israel: now he binds up the wound of Israel and in turn smites Assyria.

ו occurs with שׁבט in 10:24; 11:4; 14:5,6; 30:31. Only 10:24 and 30:31 specifically refer to Assyria; but the word שׁבט is a key word associated with Assyria in 10:5,15.

### verse 32

שׁוּב: The noun occurs in Isa 30:32 and in Gen 32:23; 1 Sam 13:23. Here a noun is to be compared to the use of the verb found in 28:19,29 where it denotes the meting out of punishment.

ו in Isaiah is always found with שׁבט (1). Both words together are associated with the power of an oppressor (9:3): Assyria (10:5,15,24) or Babel (14:5-6), but Yahweh can oppress Assyria with his rod and staff (30:32). Given the very narrow and exact limits within which the two words appear in First Isaiah, it is tempting to include the only other occurrence of the word pair in 28:27 in the same perspective. Israel's punishment symbolized by the rod and staff in 28:27 will not be forever לא לנצח - a perspective shared in ch 10 where Yahweh's punishment delivered by means of the Assyrians will not be forever: in 10:20, the use of Jacob no longer leans on him that smote them but upon Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

מוסר: If this is emended, along with many Mss to מוסרה [Wildberger 199], then it comes from the root מוּסַר and continues the theme of instruction found in 28:26.

י: The hiphil of the verb is now used against Assyria whereas in 28:2 it was Ephraim whom Yahweh struck down.

כנור, תפים: Of the two words, it is כנור which is more common in the Bible. It is found particularly in the Psalms (2) where it is always used in joyful praise of Yahweh - except in Ps 137:2 where the inability of the musicians to play in Babylon is ascribed to their nostalgia for Zion. Elsewhere the instrument is used in praise of Yahweh especially in the

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Isa 9:3; 10:5,15,24; 14:5; 28:27; 30:32.

Ps 33:2; 43:4; 49:5; 57:9; 71:22; 81:3; 92:4; 98:5; 108:3; 137:2; 147:5; 149:3; 150:3.

mple (1) but it can also be used in a secular context (2).

The noun תפִּים is less frequent. Like כְּנִרוֹת, to which it is often parallel, it is used in praise of Yahweh when it occurs in the Psalms (81:3; 149:3; 150:4) or in the service of Yahweh (Ex 15:20; 2 Sam 6:5) or in a secular context (4).

In Isaiah, כְּנִרוֹת occurs in 5:12; 24:8; 30:32 and תפִּים in 5:12; 16:11; 23:16; 24:8; 30:32. They occur parallel in 5:12; 24:8; 30:32. Neither instrument is used explicitly for the praise of Yahweh in Isaiah as it is in the Psalms and elsewhere. In its context, 30:32 must be connected with v29, the song, the feast, the gladness of heart and the flute. However in v29 all this is merely a simile to denote joy and so the instruments are mentioned in v32 only as expressions of joy and not to praise Yahweh.

מלחמה: In First Isaiah Yahweh has fought against his people (3:25; 13:4) but in chs 28-33, he fights on their behalf in 28:6; 30:32, and for Mt Zion in 31:6.

תנוּחַ: Apart from Isa 19:16; 30:32; the word is restricted to the tent (5). But in Isa 30:32, the word is more likely to be connected with the verb נוּחַ which comes from the same root.

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2 Sam 6:5; 1 Kgs 10:12; 1 Chron 13:8; 15:16,21,28; 16:5; 25:1,3,6; 2 Chron 5:12; 9:11; 20:28; 29:25.

Gen 4:21; 31:27; 1 Sam 10:5; 16:23; 16:16 (of David); Job 21:12; 30:31; Isa 5:12; 16:11; 23:16; 24:8; Ez 26:13.

Gen 31:27; 1 Sam 10:5; 2 Sam 6:5; Job 21:12; Ps 81:3; 149:3; 150:4; Isa 5:12; 24:8; 30:32; Ez 26:13.

Gen 31:27; Judg 11:34; 1 Sam 10:5; 18:6; Job 21:12; Isa 5:12; 24:8; Jer 31:4; Ez 26:13.

Ex 29:24,26,27; 35:22; 38:24,29; Lev 7:30,34; 8:27,29; 9:21; 10:14,15; 14:12,21,24; 23:15,17,20; Num 6:20; 8:11,13,15,21; 18:11.

Verse 33

תִּנּוֹ occurs once in Isaiah. Apart from Ps 90:4, its use is restricted to the books of Samuel (1 Sam 4:7; 10:11; 14:21; 19:7; 2 Sam 5:2).

תִּנּוֹ: Heider [323] argues that the form has a suffixed ה for the third person masculine singular. Once the suffixed ה on Tophet was dropped, the word was reinterpreted (and later vocalized) as a feminine form of תַּנּוֹת which would also account for the switch from the masculine to the feminine of הוּא to הִיא. תַּנּוֹת occurs in 2 Kgs 23:10; 24:7,31,32; 19:6,11,12,13,14 and in Isa 30:33. In 2 Kgs 23:10, it is a place in the Valley of Hinnom. In Jer chs 7 and 19, the context is different from Isa 30. There it is Jerusalem which is being condemned for producing foreign gods (1) but here it is the nations that are condemned to destruction. The interpretation of the MT presents problems since it appears to allude to the practice of child sacrifice offered to Molek at Tophet. Heider notes [325] that Isaiah could portray the nations as participating in Molek's cult because the theme is simply being used metaphorically: the prophet is describing the one fit use for Tophet (namely the destruction of Judah's enemies) which otherwise is abominable to Yahweh. The context supports Heider's argument: the author of v33 is not concerned with the cult of Molek as a threat, rather it is simply an image, perhaps suggested by the earlier reference to fire and burning found in v27-28.

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Jer 19 is structured around the image of the potter's vessel - a theme similar to Isa 29:16; 30:14. Vermeylen [1977: 418] attributes the interpretation of תַּנּוֹת as a place name in Isa 30:33 to the presence of the place name in Jer 19:10-12 where the vessel is shattered.

גם-הוא למלך: Weinfeld [133-54] and Kaiser [305] suggest removing the article and reading מֶלֶךְ (found in Lev 18:21; 20:2,3,4,5; 1 Kgs 11:7; Jer 32:35) and translate "to Molek" but this view is rejected by Wildberger [1210] and Irwin [105]. The LXX, Syr and 1QIsa do not read any allusion to a geographical place or to Molech in 30:33. Vermeylen [1977: 418] therefore explains the difficulty in the MT in this way: he retains the pointing in the MT: מֶלֶךְ refers to Yahweh as king and תַּפְתָּה does not refer to a geographical place but should be associated with an Aramiac root תַּפִּיָּא "to burn" [KB: 1038]. Alternatively if גם הוא למלך is an addition, it may have been added here because the glossator read תַּפְתָּה as the place name and not as a noun meaning "funeral pyre".

הוֹבֵן: The hophal of כִּוֵּן occurs in Isa 16:5 where a throne will be established in steadfast love from which will flow justice and righteousness. In 30:33, on the other hand, it is permanent destruction which is being established for the wicked.

הַרְחֵב: In v23, fertility will be plentiful for the just but in v33 fire is in abundance for the wicked.

מִדְרָתָהּ occurs only in Isa 30:33 and Ez 24:9 and means "a funeral pyre".

עֲצִים: Burning with fire and wood is normally found in prophetic

ature in the context of idols or contexts unfavourable to Yahweh (1).

נשמה sometimes denotes simply the breath of man in an objective sense to denote the fact that he is alive (2). But this breath has been given man by Yahweh (Gen 2:7). The breath of man is the lamp of Yahweh (Prov 20:27). The word occurs most consistently in Job (3) where in all cases the noun refers to Yahweh. It is his breath that gives life to man. Quite often it is parallel to רוח (4). His breath can destroy evil-doers (Job 4:9). It is his breath and spirit that makes man to understand (Job 32:8). The word is found with רוח in Ps 18:15 where it refers to the power and might of Yahweh (5).

In Isaiah, נשמה occurs in 2:22; 30:33; 42:5; 57:16 but nowhere else in prophetic literature. Isa 2:22 simply refers to the breath that causes man to live. In 42:5; 57:16; it is from Yahweh that the spirit and breath of life proceed. Only in Isa 30:33; Job 4:9; Ps 18:16 is the word used to denote the destructive power of Yahweh. A contrast exists between the breath of Yahweh that destroys his enemies and the wicked (Isa 30:33) and his spirit that gives life, peace and prosperity to the just (Isa 57:15). In its more immediate context, נשמה is to be connected with 27-28 where a close parallel occurs.

כנחל גפרית: The word גפרית occurs in Isa 30:33 and 34:9 (6).

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Isa 44:13; 60:17; Jer 5:14; 7:18; Ez 24:10; 37:20; 39:10.

Gen 7:22; Deut 20:16; Josh 10:40; 11:11,14; 1 Kgs 15:29; 17:17; Ps 150:6; Dan 10:17.

Job 4:9; 26:4; 27:3; 32:8; 33:4; 34:14; 37:10.

Job 4:9; 27:3; 32:8; 33:4; 34:14.

Elsewhere the word pair רוח, נשמה are found together in Gen 7:22; Ps 18:16; Isa 42:5; 57:16.

Elsewhere in Gen 19:24; Deut 29:22; Ps 11:6; Job 18:15; Ez 38:22.



: always expresses the punishment that Yahweh pours upon the wicked (Job 18:15; Ps 11:6; Ez 38:22) especially Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24; Deut 29:22). In both contexts in Isaiah, 30:33 and 34:9, it concerns the punishment of the nations as part of the defence of Zion.

עב ends the verse with a word taken up from v27. The theme of the verse is resumed in the fire and furnace imagery of 31:9.

## CONTEXT

The picture of Yahweh in v27-33 contrasts with his image in v18-26 and with the verbs used there (חנן, רחם, חבש את-שבר, רפא).

The image of the teacher (v20-21) contrasts with his placing on the nations a bridle that leads astray (v28). The gentle revelation of Yahweh in v20 contrasts with his dramatic appearance in v30. His careful control of the natural elements such as rain (v23) contrasts with his use of the natural elements as agents of destruction (v30). This is also true of the brooks of water (v25) which make the earth fertile as opposed to the overflowing stream (v28) which destroys the nations. In v28 he heals the blow which has been inflicted מכתו but in v31 he inflicts כ' with his rod.

Such associations suggest that v27-33 should be interpreted along with v18-26 and not as an isolated unit. This is made clear by the addresses of both sections in v19 and v29. (If v29 is a later addition, then its purpose must have been to ensure that the same audience is addressed in v27-33 as in 18-26). While v18-26 deal with the reward of the righteous, v27-33 deal with the punishment of the wicked. The function of v27-33, connected integrally to v18-26 (which in turn is

connected integrally to v1-17) may be to situate the entire chapter in a wider perspective. Three wider contexts spring to mind:

- (a) The imagery evokes ch 28, in particular the parallel fate of Ephraim (v2) and Jerusalem (v17) which are described in terms of storm imagery. 30:27-33 turns the image around - the perpetrator Assyria, synonymous with the storm imagery in ch 28 (see also 8:7-8) will be destroyed by Yahweh with an overflowing stream (v28), cloudburst, tempest, hail (v30).
- (b) V27-33 links ch 30 to the theme of the defence of Zion in language reminiscent of the preceding chapter (29:6-8) and of the following chapter (31:4-5,9). The occurrence of the words מטה, שבט recalls the development that takes place within ch 10 where Assyria, the rod and staff of Yahweh's anger (v5), is in turn destroyed by the rod and staff of Yahweh (v25). This mirrors the development that takes place in ch 30 where the (assumed) threat in v1-17 is Assyria. In v27-33 the threat of Assyria is dramatically reversed (a fact that further links v27-33 to v1-17). Against Assyria whose presence lurks throughout ch 30, the dramatic power of Yahweh in v27-33 is more effective than the futile power of Egypt.
- (c) The presence and position of v27-33 ensure that the structure of ch 30 is the same as ch 31. The repetition of a similar development in chs 30 and 31 emphasizes the message simply by repeating the same structure, namely that Assyria is only defeated by Yahweh, not by Egypt. In the context of who is powerful and who is not, the theme of idols finds a little niche in both chapters (30:22; 31:7). The structure of the two chapters can be compared:

	<u>ch 30</u>	<u>ch 31</u>
Weakness of Egypt:	v1-7	v1-3
Might of Yahweh:	v27-33	v4
Security of Zion:	v19,29	v4-5,9b
Defeat of Assyria:	v31	v8-9
Rejection of idols:	v22	v6-7

o sum up: v27-33 is linked integrally to both v18-26 and v1-17. It

sure that the whole chapter looks back at chs 28 and 29 and looks forward to ch 31 - all chapters to which it is linked by common bonds vocabulary and theme (1). The chapter turns full circle from Egypt Assyria within v1-33. It is unlikely that the process was carried out by a single conscious editorial process. Rather an emphasis on the composite nature of v19-33 would indicate that the position of v27-33 provided a framework into which different redactors felt free to make their own extensions to a context where rich vocabulary provided scope for association of words and whose breadth of theme (from the futility of Egypt's help to the destruction of Zion's enemies) allowed the inclusion of different aspects of that theme.

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Isa 30:23-25 is also rooted centrally in the context of chs 28-33: it looks back to 28:23-29, 29:17 and looks forward to 32:15-20.

**Chapter 5**

**ISAIAH 31**

## Chapter 5

ISAIAH 31isaiah 31: 1-3

## INTRODUCTION

Commentators agree that the core of 31:1-3 is a woe oracle introduced by <sup>וְ</sup> + participle and that it is directed against the Judeans in the year 701. For the majority, the main problem in 31:1-3 is determining whether v2 constitutes part of the original oracle or whether it is a post-exilic addition. Whedbee [133], Wildberger [1228], Dietrich [146], Barth [79-80], Clements [1980a: 254] and Kaiser [1974: 11-12] see it as part of the original nucleus while Childs [1967: 34], Jensen [58], Vermeylen [1977: 420-21] and Gonçalves [161] see it as secondary. However, there are equally important questions to be considered, focusing around the position given to the oracle within chs 28-33. Isa 31:1-3 are the last words of Isaiah and sum up his objections to the pro-Egyptian policy of Judah. A similar oracle concerning Judah's diplomatic links with Egypt is found in 30:1-5: is the close proximity of the two oracles the result of the editor's convenient arrangement of similar material (1) or does 31:1-3 show a development of 30:1-5 and add a further dimension to it? Does 31:1-3 introduce and anticipate the themes contained in 31:4-32:20, i.e. until the start of the next woe section in ch 33? Finally, within 31:1-3, is the form of the woe oracle as certain as is generally accepted?

Childs [1967: 23-25] summarizes the reasons given by most commentators who believe that v2 is an addition. There is a sudden

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Vermeylen [1977: 409] suggests that 30:1-5 and 31:1-3 succeeded each other in a very ancient collection of oracles but became separated by successive additions.

change in the subject: the reflective style of v2 fits poorly with an invective: v2 merely repeats in prose form the comprehensive nature of the judgment given in v3. The description of the enemy as מרעים and פעלי-און are stereotyped characterizations. Isa 31:2 has no linguistic parallel in 30:1-5 whereas other phrases in 31:1,3 have. From such arguments, Vermeylen [1977: 421] concludes that v2 probably comes from the same author as 28:29: both begin with אל + pronoun and both focus on the wisdom of Yahweh. The fact that מרעים and פעלי-און describe the impious Jews throughout the Psalms and are identified with Egypt in post-exilic times suggests to Vermeylen [1977: 421] a late dating for the verse.

Wildberger [1228] and particularly Barth [79-80] retain v2. For Barth, v2 is indispensable to the coherence of the section for v3a cannot directly follow v1. He states that v3a does not correspond to v1bβ. The thought expressed in 3a belongs with v1abα. V3a characterizes the behaviour of Egypt in contrast to v1 which characterizes the attitude of Judah. The nominal sentences in v3a break the chain of verbs in v1ab. Form critically, v3a does not correspond to the normal characteristics of the woe oracle in the way that v1 does. According to Barth [80], the form becomes regular if v2 is regarded as integral to v1 and v3. V1 is then the accusation and v2f is the announcement of judgment. אל should not be seen as a redactional device: its characteristic function is to introduce announcements of judgment in prophetic literature: often the construction אל + pronoun is used for this, e.g. Ez 5:11; 8:18; 9:10; 16:43; 23:25; Mic 6:13; Mal 2:9. If v2 is integral then v3a fits more easily: it is made up of nominal conditional sentences and its function is to build a bridge between v2b and 3b.

Barth's argument is not convincing: it is based entirely on the regularity of v3a and not on an analysis of v2. Even if v2 had been present originally, it would not have facilitated the transition to v3a. His comment that v3a concerns a condemnation of Egypt is not strictly correct. It is the futility of Egypt's help that is condemned and so directly Judah: therefore, v3a does correspond to the accusation against Judah in v1. The passages containing  $\text{Ql} + \text{pronoun}$  that Barth cites to support his point that this construction introduces announcements of judgment are nearly all in prose and are much later than the oracles of Isaiah.

However, Barth [80], alone among the commentators, rightly draws attention to the irregular nature of v3a. It is reflective in tone: it does not specify a particular judgment but offers a general type of appraisal. In this sense, v3a does correspond to v2. Although v3a may seem similar to v2 in tone, nevertheless an analysis of v2 shows it has no ties with v3a. Therefore it seems best to conclude with Gonçalves [161] against Barth that

"all indications from vocabulary, style, content and form show that v2 is an addition".

Wildberger [1231-32] and Kaiser [1974: 312-13] note in a general way the similarities in vocabulary between 31:1-3 and 30:1-5 and how the vocabulary in the section is well attested in Isaiah, Psalms and in wisdom literature - an argument they use to support both the integrity of the passage and its Isaian authenticity. Wildberger [1228] points out similarities with other parts of Isaiah:

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1. Childs [1967: 34] notes that v3 "constitutes a profound theological formulation by means of a proportion".

- 31:1 is similar to 30:2a.
- The word pair שָׁעַן, בָּטַח occurs in 31:1 and 30:12.
- The word pair רָכַב, סוּס occurs in 2:7 and 31:1.
- The word pair רָכַב, פָּרָשִׁים is found in 22:7 and 31:1.
- The phrase רָרַשׁ אֶת-יְהוָה is found in 9:12 and 31:1.
- The phrase זֶרַע-מִרְעִים in 31:2 is compared to מִרְעִים in 1:4.
- The word pair כָּשַׁל, נָפַל occurs in 31:3 and 8:15.
- The verb כָּלָה (31:3) occurs in 29:20 but with a different sense.
- The phrase נָטָה אֶת-יָד occurs frequently in Isaiah.
- The phrase קָרוּשׁ-יִשְׂרָאֵל is typically Isaian.
- The wisdom theme (31:2) is used by Isaiah elsewhere (5:21; 28:29; 29:14).

The vocabulary of 31:1-3 is indeed very rich but this does not justify Wildberger's claim [1231-32] that many of the words point to Isaianic authorship. For example, many of the texts he uses are "Isaian" in his analysis but others would not agree, e.g. 8:15, the only other text where כָּשַׁל, נָפַל appear together. Isa 28:29 cannot be attributed to the prophet with any certainty. Phrases such as רָרַשׁ אֶת-יְהוָה are not restricted to Isaiah and are found in many other instances throughout the OT. זֶרַע מִרְעִים does occur in Isa 1:4 but is much more typical of the language of the Psalms.

In short, all the vocabulary in 31:1-3 is well attested throughout the Bible: there are no hapax legomena and nothing peculiarly Isaian about any of the words. It is the theme, subject and form of the oracle and not the vocabulary that support its Isaian authorship.

Wildberger [1228-29] makes the important point that one expects 30:1-5 to be the last words of Isaiah on Judah's diplomatic relations with Egypt. He suggests that 31:1-3 belongs to a slightly later date than 30:1-5 and perhaps refers to the same situation as 30:6f. He notes that 31:1-3 is tied less to an historical situation than 30:1-5 and that 31:3a



offers a theological reflection on current events: it is a last word on the subject of seeking help from sources other than Yahweh. Gonçalves [161] similarly stresses that the accusation in v1 involves attitudes and v3a which responds to it carries a religious significance.

It is along these lines that the answer is to be found as to why the two oracles which are very similar are found side by side. Isa 31:1-3 is the last word on the subject of dealings with Egypt and so the theme of misplaced trust is highlighted. Egypt's role is insignificant in the oracle: it has been already dealt with adequately in 30:1-5. The point is that Judah did not place her trust in Yahweh, a theme which made the oracle easy to actualize for later generations. Her choice of Egypt was a rejection of Yahweh.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 1

מצרים	see 30:3,7.
עזר	see 30:7.
סוס	see 30:16.
שען, בטח	see 30:12.
פרשים	see 28:28.

רַכָּב occurs in Isa 21:7,9; 22:6,7; 31:1; 36:9; 43:17; 66:20 and the noun מִרְכָּבָה in 2:7; 22:18; 66:15. Like the noun סוס, רַכָּב denotes military strength (21:7,9; 22:6,7; 31:1; 36:9) and both nouns are often found together in 2:7; 31:1; 36:8; 43:17; 66:20.

עָצָם I, meaning "to be strong", is found only in Isaiah in 31:1. It is

found elsewhere (1) but forms no consistent pattern throughout the OT.

שׁעַה: In Isaiah the verb occurs in 17:7-8; 22:4; 31:1; 32:2 and in the hithpael form in 41:10,23. Elsewhere it occurs in Gen 4:4; Ex 5:9; 2 Sam 22:42; Job 7:14; 14:6; Ps 39:14; 119:117. Gonçalves [162] suggests that when the verb is used figuratively it has the nuance of looking with interest and confidence towards Yahweh (2 Sam 22:42; Isa 17:7) or towards some other reality (Ex. 5:9; Isa 17:8). In Isaiah, 17:7-8 and 31:1 express opposite ideas. In 17:7-8, men will have regard for Yahweh rather than pagan idols while in 31:1, men look to Egypt rather than having regard for Yahweh.

רָרַשׁ: The expression אֶת-יְהוָה רָרַשׁ, or sometimes with the preposition בִּ in the phrase בִּיהוָה רָרַשׁ, expresses two ideas. Firstly individuals or a nation may "seek Yahweh" within the general context of their behaviour and conduct. Secondly individuals may "inquire of Yahweh" concerning a precise incident about which they would like advice or a solution - the inquiry is normally made through a prophet or cultic oracle. Ruprecht [464] suggests that the meaning "to seek Yahweh" in a more general sense is a late post-exilic development of the original meaning of the phrase which was the technical expression designating the consultation of Yahweh by means of a prophet: but Gonçalves [163] disagrees stating that the phrase with the more general sense can be found in the eighth century prophets (Isa 9:12; Isa 31:1; Hos 10:12; Amos 5:6). In any case, it is easy to see how both meanings could blend together later without causing any ambiguity in the context in which the phrase occurs.

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1. In Gen 26:16; Ex 1:7,20; Ps 38:20; 40:6,13; 69:5; 105:24; 139:17; Jer 5:6; 15:8; 30:14,15; Dan 8:8,24; 11:23.

In the OT, the phrase occurs with great consistency in the books of Psalms and Chronicles but also quite frequently in prophetic literature. In the Psalms, the phrase **רָשׁ אֶת-יְהוָה** always expresses the desire to seek and follow Yahweh or negatively, it describes the fate of those who do not (9:11; 10:4; 14:2; 53:3; 22:27; 24:6; 34:10; 35:4; 53:3; 69:32; 77:3; 78:34; 105:4; 119:2,10). As well as seeking Yahweh it can also denote seeking his precepts (112:2; 119:45,94,155).

In the Books of Chronicles, whether a king sought the Lord during his lifetime constitutes a major criterion by which the king's life is evaluated - an evaluation often made in the period immediately prior to his death. The reason given for Saul's death in 1 Chron 10:14 is that he did not seek Yahweh; then, beginning from David, the performance of kings is evaluated by the extent to which they sought Yahweh. David urges the leaders of Israel (1 Chron 22:19) and the young Solomon (1 Chron 28:9) to seek the Lord. At the start of 2 Chronicles the author holds up Solomon's conduct as an example in 1:5 where he states that Solomon and all the assembly sought the Lord. Subsequent kings are measured against this yardstick. Asa, at first, commanded all Judah to seek the Lord (2 Chron 14:3; 15:2). Under him, anyone who did not do so was to be put to death. In 2 Chron 15:1-7, the Chronicler advises Asa (and the reader) through the mouth of Azariah to seek the Lord and assures him that peace and prosperity ensue from this. Later, however, Asa relies for support on the King of Syria and not Yahweh and eventually becomes so evil that towards the end of his life he does not seek the Lord, not even when his feet become diseased (2 Chron 16:12).

Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, is praised by the Chronicler because he sought the Lord and not the Baals (2 Chron 17:4; 20:3). In 2 Chron 18:4-22, he inquires of the Lord before going into battle against

Ramoth-Gilead; it is the prophet Micaiah who alone among the prophets truly seeks the word of Yahweh for him concerning this event. After his return from battle, the Chronicler assesses Jehoshaphat's conduct through the mouth of Jehu and although it is far from perfect, Jehu concludes

"some good is left in you because you have set your heart to seek Yahweh". (2 Chron 19:3).

Jehoshaphat was so righteous that even his evil grandson, Ahaziah, received a decent burial because they said

"he is the grandson of Jehoshaphat who sought the Lord with all his heart". (2 Chron 22:9).

In 2 Chron 25:15,20, Yahweh is angry with Amaziah because he sought the gods of another people. In 2 Chron 26:5, as long as Uzziah seeks Yahweh, he prospers in all that he does. It is not surprising that the Chronicler puts into the mouth of Hezekiah a very short prayer which sums up what he values most

"May the Lord pardon everyone who seeks the Lord". (2 Chron 30:18).

Hezekiah himself sought the Lord and prospered (2 Chron 31:20). As for Josiah, he began to seek the Lord while still only a boy (2 Chron 34:3). In 2 Chron 34:19-29, Huldah the prophetess announces that even though Yahweh plans to bring evil upon the people and place, Josiah "he who seeks the Lord" will be spared.

The opening chapter of 2 Kings deals with the fate of Ahaziah after he had fallen out of his upstairs window in Galilee. Three times it is stressed (v3,6,16) that he inquired from Baal-zebub, god of Ekron, and

not Yahweh, whether he would recover from his illness. The fact that he sought Baal-zebub and not Yahweh seems to obsess the editor of 2 Kings ch 1 who has great relish in announcing in 1:7 that Ahaziah did in fact die.

Although the verb שׁרר occurs often in Deuteronomy, only in 4:29 does it occur as part of the phrase שׁרר את-יהוה.

In prophetic literature the verb occurs most often in Isaiah (1:17; 8:19; 9:12; 11:10; 16:5; 19:3; 31:1; 34:16; 55:6; 58:2; 62:12; 65:1,10), Jeremiah (8:2; 10:21; 21:2; 29:7,13; 30:14,17; 37:7; 38:4) and Ezekiel (14:3,7,10; 20:1,3,31,37,40; 33:6; 34:6,8,10,11) but rarely in Hosea (10:12), Amos (5:4,5,6,14), Micah (6:8) and Zephaniah (1:6).

In First Isaiah, seeking or not seeking Yahweh occurs in 9:12; 31:1 and in Second Isaiah in 55:6; 58:2; 65:1,10. As in Chronicles, not seeking the Lord in 9:12 and 31:1 is a disastrous course to follow and 9:12f and 31:1f draw out the negative consequences. The people are condemned for seeking the advice of mediums in 8:19 and of idols in 19:3. In 1:17 and 16:5 the people are urged to seek justice and righteousness.

In Jer 8:2, not seeking Yahweh but other gods is put on a par with death. In 10:21, the shepherds have not consulted Yahweh and so do not prosper. In 29:13, Yahweh will restore the fortunes of the people if they seek him. In 21:2; 37:7, Zedekiah inquires of the Lord through Jeremiah, what he is to do now that the Egyptians have withdrawn and left them open to the attack of the Chaldean army.

In Ezekiel, the verb is used to inquire of the Lord through a prophet (14:3,7,10). In 20:1,3, Yahweh will not be sought by them. The verb occurs most often in the context of seeking the lost sheep (34:6,8,10,11).

Elsewhere in prophetic literature, the verb שׁרר is always used of seeking Yahweh (Amos 5:4,5,6; Hos 10:12; Zeph 1:6). On the other hand,

Mic 6:8 describes in some detail what Yahweh seeks from his people.

### Verse 2

גם-הוא occurs in Isa 30:33 and 31:2. גם-אלה occurs in 28:7 and גם-זאת in 28:29. גם + pronoun introduce wisdom motifs in Isa 28:7; 28:29; 31:2 and is an important constituent of Childs's "summary appraisal form" [1967: 129] which he traces back to wisdom literature.

חכם resumes the theme of Yahweh's wisdom introduced in 28:29 and continued in 29:15-16.

רע occurs approximately 25 times in the Psalms, 45 times in Proverbs, 8 times in Job and 12 times in Qoheleth.

In Isaiah, it occurs in 3:11; 5:20; 31:2; 32:7; 33:15; 45:7; 56:2; 59:7,15; 65:12; 66:4. All the occurrences of the word in First Isaiah are found in contexts which have wisdom characteristics - either in vocabulary or form.

קום resumes the theme of Yahweh rising up to punish introduced in 28:21.

מרעים occurs in Job 8:20; Ps 22:17; 26:5; 27:2; 37:1,9; 64:3; 92:12; 94:16; 119:115; Prov 24:19; Isa 1:4; 14:20; 31:2; Jer 20:13; 23:14. The word appears in the phrase זרע-מרעים in Isa 1:4; 14:20. In 31:2, the מרעים are identified as מצרים: a pun is perhaps intended since both words look and sound similar.

פעלי-און occurs in Job 34:8,22; Isa 31:2; Hos 6:8 but particularly in the

Psalms where it occurs 14 times (1).

### Verse 3

אָרֶם: see 29:19.

אֵל: Although the word occurs frequently in Isaiah (2), it is found most often in Psalms (65 times) and Job (54 times).

In a wisdom context in Ez 28:2,9, the prince of Tyre is reminded that he is man and not God:

וְאַתָּה אָרֶם וְלֹא אֵל

In Hos 11:9, Yahweh states that he is God and not man:

אֵל אֲנִי וְלֹא אִישׁ

בָּשָׂר occurs in First Isaiah in 9:19; 10:18; 17:4; 22:13; 31:3 and in Second Isaiah in 40:5,6; 44:16,19; 49:36; 58:7; 65:16,17,23,24. It is used with the verb אָכַל in 9:19; 22:13; 44:16,19; 49:26; 65:4; 66:17. In 10:18, it occurs as part of the phrase נֶפֶשׁ וּבָשָׂר and so emphasizes the physical as opposed to the spiritual.

In Second Isaiah, the word is often opposed to Yahweh. In 40:5, the inferiority of the flesh is contrasted with the might of Yahweh. In 40:6, the flesh is grass which withers but the word of Yahweh stands forever. In 66:16,23,24, "all flesh" which is transient contrasts with Yahweh who is Lord.

נֹטָה occurs in Isaiah in 3:16; 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:2,4; 14:26,27; 23:11; 29:21; 30:11; 31:3; 34:11; 37:17 and in Second Isaiah in 40:22; 42:5; 44:13,20,24; 45:12; 51:13; 54:2; 55:3; 66:12. It is often used in First Isaiah of Yahweh stretching out his hand in judgment - 5:25; 9:11,16,20; 10:4; 14:26,27;

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1. Ps 5:6; 6:9; 14:4; 28:3; 36:13; 53:5; 64:3; 92:8,10; 94:4,6; 101:8; 141:4,9.
  2. Isa 5:16; 8:8,10; 9:5; 10:21; 12:2; 14:13; 31:3; 40:18; 42:5; 43:10,12; 44:10,15,17; 45:14,15,20,21,22; 46:6,9.

23:11;31:3. This is not so in Second Isaiah where it generally denotes how Yahweh stretched out the heavens as part of his act of creation. The motif of Yahweh's outstretched hand is not restricted to First Isaiah. It denotes Yahweh's judgment and impending punishment especially in the later sections of prophetic literature (1). Yahweh had once stretched out his hand against Israel's enemies particularly Egypt in the Exodus experience (Ex 7:5; 15:12), sometimes working through Moses and Aaron (Ex 7:19; 8:1,13; 9:22; 10:12,21,22; 14:21,26,27) or Joshua (Josh 8:19,26). Such saving acts are remembered in later generations especially in the phrase "with outstretched hand" (2). The motif therefore is not restricted to First Isaiah: indeed within First Isaiah itself, 14:26,27 may reflect how the theme was picked up and used by a later redactor [Sheppard 1985: 196].

נָשַׁל depicts the fate of those who trust in Egypt, a fate similar to those who do not hear the word of Yahweh in 28:13.

נָפַל occurs in First Isaiah in 3:8; 8:15; 9:7,9; 14:12; 21:9; 22:25; 24:20; 30:13,25; 31:3,8; 34:17 and once in Second Isaiah in 47:11. The use of the verb in 3:8 is similar to its use in 31:3. Isa 3:8 concerns Judah and Jerusalem and the two verbs נָפַל, נָשַׁל are parallel: the verse acts as a resumé - it explains that Jerusalem and Judah have fallen because their speech and their deeds were against Yahweh.

Elsewhere in First Isaiah the verb נָפַל occurs in later passages in the book: it is used of the fall of Babylon (21:9), of the fall of the king of

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1. Jer 6:12; 15:6; 21:5; 51:25; Ez 6:14; 14:9,13; 16:27; 25:7,13,16; 35:3; Zeph 1:4; 2:13.
  2. Deut 4:34; 7:19; 11:2; 1 Kgs 8:42; 2 Chron 6:32; Ps 136:12; Jer 32:21; Ez 20:33,34.



Babylon (14:12) and of the fall of Assyria (31:8). In two eschatological passages, the earth falls (24:20) and on the day of the great slaughter, the towers fall (30:25). In 30:13, the participle occurs as part of a simile denoting the crashing of a wall. The verb occurs in 8:15 but the authenticity of the verse is doubtful.

יחרו occurs most often in Isaiah (27 times) particularly Second Isaiah (17 times). It frequently occurs in a context where wrongdoers are destroyed (1:28,31; 43:17; 45:16; 66:17).

כלה occurs within chs 28-33 in 28:22; 29:20; 31:3; 32:10. Although Yahweh often brings about disaster (1:28; 10:18,22,23,25; 16:4; 21:16), it is particularly associated with the scoffer and the wicked in 28:22; 29:20; 31:3. The destruction of the wicked may be reflected in the destruction of the harvest expressed by the same verb כלה (15:6; 32:10).

## CONTEXT

The passage has a stereotyped vocabulary which appears elsewhere in Isaiah and in the OT especially Psalms:

בטח, שען  
 ירדים מצרים  
 ררש את-יהוה  
 חכם  
 ויבא רע  
 מרעים  
 פעלי-און  
 אדם, אל  
 נטה ידו  
 כשל, נפל

Many of the words are used of Yahweh especially in the Psalms:

בטח, שען  
שעה  
דרש  
עזר  
נטה ידו

Much of the vocabulary anticipates words which emerge in the rest of the woe section (ch 31-32):

סכר/סרה	v2, 6
ידיכם, ידו	v2, 7
לא איש, לא אדם	v2, 8
נפל	v3, 8
רוח	31:2,

The oracle 31:1,3, is easily actualized by the addition of v2: it conveys the message, albeit in a negative way, that the just are those who trust in Yahweh and the wicked are those who put their trust in evil. The similarity in spelling and sound between מצרים and מרעים has the effect of identifying Egypt as a symbol of the wicked, thus highlighting further the opposition between them and Yahweh. It is v2 which slants 31:1,3 in this way and which adapts the oracle to its present context. V2 resumes, in an explicit way, the important themes of the chapter. The rest of chs 31 and 32 are to be understood in the light of the way 31:1,3 have been interpreted by the author of v2 where the direction of the verse interprets not only v1,3, but the whole of the woe section 31:1-32:20. The condemnation and defeat of the wicked (31:1-3, 8-9; 32:5-7) anticipate the reward of the just in 32:15-20.

As in 28:29, the harshness of Yahweh's punishment is off-set by the fact that this is done in all wisdom. The observation that Yahweh's words cannot be turned back reinforces the importance of listening to his word found throughout chs 28-33. The "rising up" of Yahweh resumes the theme of 28:21.

Finally, Isa 31:1-3 resembles 47:10-11 in vocabulary and in theme: the words רעה, חכם, בטח are found in both contexts. The phrase וַיָּבֹא רַע in 31:2 is similar to בֹּא עֲלֶיךָ רַע in 47:11. The theme too is similar. In 47:10, the people trust in wickedness and not in Yahweh: their wisdom and knowledge have led them astray. For this, unavoidable disaster will befall them, a theme similar to that found in 31:2.

### Isaiah 31: 4-9

## INTRODUCTION

Isa 31:4-9 is regarded as composite, containing very little material from the prophet. Most commentators (Childs [1967: 58], Vermeylen [1977: 423], Barth [80-81], Wildberger [1238-9]), begin by isolating v6-7 which they regard as a post-exilic commentary on v4-5. Clements [1980a: 256], for example, sees in v6-7 two separate glosses: the phrase בְּיוֹם הַהוּא marks v7 out as a separate addition. The function of v6 is to show that to secure Yahweh's protection involves a new act of penitence while v7 interprets this in terms of worship of idols. Various opinions have been put forward as to the form and interpretation of the remaining verses, v4-5 and v8-9.

A major discussion point has been whether v4 constitutes a threat or a promise. Childs [1967: 57-59] sums up the arguments in favour of

reading it as a threat, a position adopted by most subsequent scholars. The problem in v4 centres around the simile: if it is interpreted as a word of promise, the image is incongruous – the lion protects and the shepherds seek to destroy. Wherever the verb **על צבא** occurs, it means to fight against (Num 31:7; Isa 29:7,8; Zech 14:12). The formula **כִּי כֹה** introduces a threat rather than a promise (8:5; 21:16; 31:4).

Once v4 is accepted as a threat, Vermeulen [977: 432], Barth [86-88], Clements [1980a: 256] and Gonçalves [230] have no difficulty in assigning it to Isaiah and to the crisis of 701. Their next step follows logically: since v4 is a threat and v5 is a promise, the two verses did not originally belong together and so they propose separating them. V5 is dependent upon v4, the structure of which it imitates: it provides a framework for re-interpreting v4 and is a corrective commentary upon it.

Wildberger [1239-40] however, defends the authenticity of all the verses, v4-5 and v8-9. At the last moment, Isaiah asserted that Yahweh would protect and deliver Jerusalem in 701. The prophet himself turned the threat contained in v4 into a promise. He connects **על** with **רָר** rather than with **צבא** and holds that the picture here is not of a lion that pounces upon its prey but rather of a lion that protects its prey from those who seek to take it away.

Other commentators limit Isaian authorship to v4 and, in various ways, link v5 to v8-9. Barth [83] sees the original Isaianic unit as v1-4, 8a. The threat against Jerusalem was transformed with the addition of v5, 8b-9 into a threat against Assyria by the AR editors. Clements's suggestion [1980a: 256] is more vague: he agrees with Barth except that he attributes all of v5, 8, 9, to his Josianic redactor – yet he does not see them as coming from the same hand. The verses came about

gradually

"through a process of developmental elaboration of basic themes" [257].

He stresses that there is no ambiguity about the simile in v4: it is a final dire warning to Jerusalem. For Clements, the point of the simile is very straightforward: Yahweh is the lion, Jerusalem is the prey and the fate of the victim is certain in spite of the shepherds, i.e. those who come to Jerusalem's assistance. It was the Josianic redactor who, in the arrangement of v4-5, 8-9 was responsible for giving the impression that v4 originally had a positive meaning.

Exum [1981: 338], in her literary analysis, concludes that v4 cannot be positive: the lion cannot be seen as protector and does not have a right to the sheep. She believes that the juxtaposition of v5 controls and secures the meaning of v4 so that, in its present context, it has a positive significance.

Kaiser [1974: 315] does not attribute any of the section v4-9 to Isaiah. He takes v4 to be a promise and emphasizes the possessive quality of the lion - Yahweh does not let anyone take away what does not belong to them. The mixed images in v4-5 point to a poet who was set upon his purpose but was not so consistent in carrying it out: in other words, the poet became confused as to the referents of the simile. Kaiser concludes [1974: 318] that v4-5, 8a, 9b, were written by an apocalyptic poet interested in the dramatic intervention of Yahweh. His technique was one of allusion which explains the composite nature of these verses. V8b and v9a were added by a later glossator who felt that the details of the attackers' fate were not sufficiently clear.

Therefore, among the commentators, three basic positions are espoused. Wildberger [1239-40] attributes the core of v4-9 to Isaiah. Vermeylen [1977: 421-4], Barth [335], Clements [1980a: 256-57] and Gonçalves [230] attribute v4 to Isaiah and explain v5, 8, 9, as later additions or glosses. Kaiser [1974: 315] rejects any Isaian authenticity and attributes the core, v4-5, 8a, 9b, to a later apocalyptic poet with additions and glosses coming from even later times. It is worth noting that Wildberger and Kaiser, who represent both ends of the historical spectrum, should think that v4 and 5 were written by the same author, in the case of Wildberger by Isaiah and in the case of Kaiser by a late poet - a view not shared by other commentators who attribute v4-5 to separate authors.

It is unfortunate that the interpretation of v4-9 hinges on the translation of the verb **על נצח**. Even if the texts often quoted (Num 31:7; Isa 29:7,8; Zech 14:12) do mean "to fight against", they come from a period much later than Isaiah so that a negative interpretation of the verb is no proof that it comes from Isaiah - some one else could have written the verse. Secondly, all commentators note the anthological nature of the section: since the verb occurs in close proximity in 29:7,8, might not the author of 31:4 simply have picked up the verb from this context and might he not have felt that, given the context of 31:4f, there could be no ambiguity about its meaning? Could not a contextual reading of v4-9 determine that **על נצח** in v4 must mean "fight upon"?

V5 has been separated from v4 by many commentators simply on the grounds that the former contains a positive image while v4 contains a negative one. The crux again is how one translates **על נצח**. Vocabulary, style and structure all point to the fact that both verses

should be treated together. Furthermore, the position of **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה** in v4a and **נֹאֵם יְהוָה** in v9b ensures that the simile in v4 falls into the section v4-9 and does not form part of the threat in v1-3. There is a close correspondence between Egypt in v1-3 and Assyria in v8-9: both powers will perish before Yahweh. The two similes in v4-5 hold a central position between v1-3 and v8-9 (v6-7 are late). The function of the similes is to show that real power and salvation lies in Yahweh. It is his supernatural power which is highlighted in v1-3 and v8-9. The editor of ch 31 is not dealing with specific historical situations in 31:1-3 (we look to 30:1-5 for that) nor in v8-9: neither is there a specific historical reference behind v4 (e.g. 701 in the opinion of Wildberger [1240]). It is only when **עַל צַבָּא** is translated negatively that a historical dimension and date can be arrived at. The supernatural emphasis in v1-3 and v8-9 tends to suggest, as Kaiser [1974: 315] argues, that a dramatic supernatural intervention is intended in v4-5 rather than a veiled threat in v4 which refers to Assyria.

Therefore, v4-5 should be taken together. The direction of the argument should not be microscoped into the translation of **עַל צַבָּא**: a wider contextual reading of ch 31 puts the verb into perspective – both for the author who wrote the verse and for the reader. Such a contextual reading easily facilitates the meaning "to fight upon" (1) and causes no friction or ambiguity in the context.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 4

**כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**: The phrase (with some slight variation) is found within chs 28-33 in 28:16; 29:13,22; 30:12; 30:15; 31:4. The occurrence of the

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1. Exum [1981: 337] chooses the meaning "to fight over" to preserve a certain ambiguity in the context.

phrase in 31:4a and of נאם יהוה in v9b acts as an *inclusio*. As Wildberger [1238] points out, the presence of similar expressions in v4a and v9b stresses that what occurs between has the stamp of Yahweh's authority.

הגה: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 8:19; 16:7; 31:4; 33:18; 38:14; 59:3,11,13. It occurs frequently in Wisdom literature, in Psalms (1), Proverbs (2) and in Job 27:4. It occurs 8 times in Isaiah but nowhere else in prophetic literature (3). The basic meaning of the verb is "to meditate or contemplate" Yahweh or his law (Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2; 63:7; 77:13; 143:5). It can denote the uttering of something which has been deeply thought about, e.g. wisdom in Ps 37:30 or truth in Prov 8:7. It can simply mean "to speak" as in Ps 35:28; 71:24; 115:7 but sometimes it is used of speaking falsehood and lies as in Job 27:4; Ps 2:1; 38:13; Prov 24:2. Falsehood and lies require deliberate thought so that meditating upon evil is presented as the antithesis of meditating upon Yahweh.

It is interesting that the word occurs only in Isaiah apart from Job, Psalms and Proverbs. In Isa 33:18, it means "to meditate" (upon the deeds of Yahweh) but in 59:3,13, it denotes the planning and uttering of deceit. In 38:14 and 59:11, the verb is used in a simile to compare the despair and suffering of the people to the moaning of a dove. In 59:11 the verb denotes the sound that the dove makes and is parallel to the verb הנה which denotes the sound of the bear. In 8:19 it is used of the sound made by the mediums who "chirp and mutter" and so may be an onomatopoeic word, perhaps even the sound of the dove. In 16:7, the verb denotes the crying out or wailing of Moab and in 31:4, it denotes

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1. Ps 1:2; 2:1; 35:28; 37:30; 38:13; 63:7; 71:24; 77:13; 115:7; 143:5
  2. Prov 8:7; 15:28; 24:2
  3. It appears in Jer 48:31 but this verse has the same provenance as Isa 16:7.



the sound of the lion.

Some observations can be noted about the use of נָגַן in Isaiah. Only in Isaiah is the verb used to denote the sound of a bird or animal, the lion in 31:4, the dove in 38:14 and 59:11 and the onomatopoeic sound of 8:19. Only in Isaiah is the verb used as part of a simile (31:4; 38:14; 59:11) or in a context of oppression and mourning (16:7; 38:14; 59:11). The simile in 31:4 is not the same as that in 38:14; 59:11: in the latter it suggests weakness and vulnerability while in the former the simile of the lion suggests strength and confidence.

אֲרִי: The noun appears very frequently throughout the OT as part of a rich literary image, metaphor or simile. In the Pentateuch, its use is restricted to the poetic discourses where it occurs as part of a simile describing the strength of the tribes of Judah, Israel and Dan (Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; 24:9; Deut 33:22).

In the historical writings, the lion denotes strength and often the ability to destroy: in Judges, Samson is so strong that he can slay a lion (Judg 14:5, 8, 9, 18). In 1 Samuel, David insists on his strength by relating how he used to kill the lions which prowled upon his flocks (17:34,39). In 2 Samuel, the heart of a valiant man is compared to the heart of a lion (17:10) and Benaiah slays a lion which is an indication of his strength (23:20). Solomon had lions engraved on his throne and around his palace symbolizing the strength of his reign and of his empire (1 Kgs 7:29,36; 10:19,20; 2 Chron 9:18-19). In 1 Kings, Yahweh sends a lion to destroy the prophet who disobeyed him (13:24-28).

In the Psalms (7:3; 10:9; 17:12; 22:14,17,22) the strength and destructive power of the lion provides a very adaptable image. The lion is always identified with the enemy or evil doers from whom the psalmist prays to be delivered. In Lamentations, Yahweh is compared to

a lion in hiding (3:10) but in Job Yahweh can destroy lions because he is all powerful (4:10). Proverbs uses the image to compare a wicked king to a lion roaring over the poor (28:15).

In prophetic literature, the image is used in different contexts. In earlier texts, the weakness and vulnerability of the nation contrast with the might of Assyria and Babylon which are compared to lions (Jer 4:7; 5:6; 59:17; Joel 1:6). Even though Israel used to have the strength of a lion, Yahweh will take away this strength (Nah 2:12,13). But in later texts, the image is used in favour of Israel: in Mic 5:7, the remnant of Jacob will be like a lion among the nations. In Jer 49:11, Yahweh will act like a lion towards Edom on Israel's behalf. In Hos 11:10, Yahweh, roaring like a lion, summons his sons out of Egypt.

The image occurs in Isaiah in 11:7; 15:9; 31:4; 35:9; 38:13; 65:25 (1). Only in Isaiah is the lion at rest, thus conveying very effectively a message of peace (11:7; 35:9; 65:25). As in Jer 49:19, a lion will destroy those in Moab who escape in 15:9. The image in 31:4 and 38:13 denotes strength and power. The dramatic impact of the lion in 31:4 serves to highlight how powerful Yahweh is (2).

נפִיר: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 5:29; 11:6; 31:4. It is used with אריה in Isa 11:6; 31:4 (3). As an image it carries the same significance as אריה. In 5:29, the נפִירים are the "nations afar off" (v26). They take their prey טרף which signifies Judah and go unchallenged. In 31:4, the lion or young lion is Yahweh and the prey is Zion: but while in 5:29 there is no one to rescue, in 31:4b a band of shepherds tries to challenge

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1. אריה in 21:8 is generally emended with 1QIsa and Syr to אֲרִיָּה.
  2. As in Isa 31:4, Amos 3:4 suggests that the lion only roars when it has prey.
  3. The word pair also occurs in Judg 14:5; Ez 19:6.

the lion. It is important to note the protective and defensive function of the shepherds in the simile. The image of 5:29 is developed in 31:4. This is supported by the fact that the word טרף occurs in Isaiah only in these two texts.

טרף occurs in 5:29; 31:4, both times in the image of the lion. It is in this context where the noun is normally found (1). It can also be used of the prey of wild asses (Job 24:5) or wolves (Ez 22:27). The word can also be used to denote the righteous who are a prey to the wicked (Job 29:17; Ps 124:6) or it can simply denote food (Ps 111:5; Prov 31:15; Mal 3:10).

מלא-רעים: The noun מלא occurs in Isa 6:3; 8:8; 31:4; 34:1; 42:10. Elsewhere the word occurs very often in the Pentateuch and prophetic literature but is only found in Gen 48:19 (multitude of nations) and Isa 31:4 (band of shepherds) to denote a group. In Isaiah, it is used in the sense of "full" or "entire" (6:3; 8:8; 34:1; 42:10). The word רעים occurs in Isaiah only in 13:20; 31:4; 56:11. In Jer 49:17f, Yahweh acts like a lion towards Edom which is pictured as a strong sheepfold.

חתת (see 30:31). The verb does not express fear before an animal except in Isa 31:4 (2). In view of the contexts in which the verb is used elsewhere in the OT (where an action supported by Yahweh causes fear), חתת in 31:4 may be linked with חתו in 31:9. In the simile in 31:4 Yahweh is not afraid of the band of shepherds: on the other hand, in 31:9, he inspires fear and terror into the enemies of Zion.

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1. Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; Job 4:11; 38:29; Ps 104:21; Ez 19:3,6; 22:25; Amos 3:4.
  2. In Job 39:22 the verb is used to describe the fearlessness of the horse.

ענה II: The verb, meaning "to be oppressed, afflicted" occurs once in First Isaiah but 7 times in Second Isaiah (53:4,7; 58:3,5,10; 60:14; 64:11). In 31:4, it is found parallel to חתת. It is surprising that there are no other texts in the OT where the two verbs are parallel. It is also surprising that whereas חתת occurs chiefly in the prophetic literature especially Jeremiah, ענה, on the other hand, occurs rarely in the prophets and never in Jeremiah: it is to be found mainly in the Psalms (where חתת does not appear) or scattered throughout the Pentateuch and historical books.

המון: (see 29:5,7,8)

יִרָד: Isa 31:1 concerns those who "go down" to Egypt for help instead of looking to Yahweh. In v4, Yahweh himself "goes down" to Zion to fight upon it.

צבא: (see 29:7,8).

גבעה: (see 30:17).

### Verse 5

Gonçalves [291] notes that the structure of v5 is identical to the structure of v4:

V4                      כאשר .. בן

V5                      בן .. בן

Both denote an action of Yahweh towards Jerusalem and in both cases they take their images from the animal world: he concludes that the two verses have opposite meanings and are simply juxtaposed. Gonçalves [291] argues that the author of v5 picks up the structure of v4 and

inserts a contradictory message - with imagery borrowed from 10:14 and with a reference to the Passover tradition. The *reprise* of the image in 10:4 suggests the identity of the enemy.

צפרים: The noun צפור occurs only once in Isaiah in 31:5 but is found in prophetic literature in Ez 17:23; 39:4,17; Hos 11:11; Amos 3:5. In the last two instances, images of the lion and the bird are found together. Ez 39:4,17 offers a contrast to Isa 31:5, since, in Ezekiel, Yahweh gives his sinful people over to birds of prey to be destroyed. The noun occurs most often in the Psalms (1), quite often as part of a simile (Ps 11:1; 84:4; 102:8; 124:7) which frequently stresses the fragility and vulnerability of the bird. There is no other simile in the OT which stresses the protective instinct of the צפור as Isa 31:5 does.

עפות: The root עוף appears most often in Isaiah (6:2,6; 11:14; 14:29; 30:6; 31:5; 60:8). It occurs very rarely in other prophetic literature (Ez 32:10; Nah 3:16). It is found in Job (5:7; 20:8), Psalms (18:11; 55:7; 90:10; 91:5), and Proverbs (23:5; 26:2).

In Isa 6:2,6, it is the seraphim who fly (2). In 11:14, the verb denotes the action of swooping against the enemy and in 14:29, 30:6, the hostile image of the "flying serpent" appears. In 30:6, the Judeans travel to Egypt for help through the land of the "flying serpent" but in 31:5, Yahweh comes to the help of Zion like "flying birds". It is to Psalms and Proverbs that one must turn to find the verb עוף used explicitly of birds as it is in Isa 31:5.

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1. Ps 8:9; 11:1; 84:4; 102:8; 104:17; 124:7; 148:10.

2. In Ps 18:11 (2 Sam 22:11) Yahweh comes flying on a cherub to avenge the just.

In Ps 91:4, the just seek protection under the wings of Yahweh and in 91:13, he who finds protection under his wings can tread the lion and the its young underfoot. The phrase **צפרים עפות** occurs only in Isa 31:5. Gonçalves [292-3] compares the simile to 10:14 but there are no parallels in vocabulary and it is unlikely that it is the same simile which is employed.

**גן**: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 31:5; 37:35; 38:6 (= 2 Kgs 19:34; 20:6). It always refers to the defence of Zion. Gonçalves [293] notes that outside of 31:5 the verb is only found in the qal in 2 Kgs 18:13-20:19 and in the hiphil in Zech 9:15 and 12:8.

**פסח**: BDB [820] and KB [769] distinguish **פסח** I "to pass over" from **פסח** II "to limp". The verb occurs in Ex 12:13,23,27; 2 Sam 4:4; 1 Kgs 18:21,26; 2 Sam 4:4; Isa 31:5. In Ex 12, Yahweh passes over the Israelites, i.e. he does not disturb or punish them as he does the Egyptians. In 1 Kgs 18:21,26 and 2 Sam 4:4, the verb means "to be lame". In Isa 31:5, the meaning must be "to spare" or "to protect" since it occurs between the verbs **הציל** and **המליט**. Its use may have been prompted in v5 by the presence of the image of the hovering birds suggesting their slow, lingering movements.

Gonçalves [293-4] sees in 31:5 an explicit reference to the Passover. In Ex.12:27, **פסח** and **הציל** are found together as in Isa 31:5. Yahweh acts as a protector for Jerusalem as for the first born of the Hebrews but as a destroyer for the first born of the Egyptians. Kaiser [1974: 317] suggests that the purpose of the reference to the Passover is to arouse confidence in the future saving actions of Yahweh. Wildberger [1243-4], however, hesitates in seeing such an explicit reference in v5 but solely on the grounds that oracles of Isaiah never refer to the Passover tradition.

**צל** occurs in Isaiah in 5:29; 19:20; 20:6; 31:5; 36:14,15,18,19,20; 37:11,12;

38:6; 42:22; 43:13; 44:20; 47:14; 50:2; 57:13 (1). Isa 5:29 contains similar vocabulary to 31:4-5: מציל, טרף, כפרים and 5:29 has פלט for מלט in 31:5 (2). Isa 31:5 effectively reverses 5:29: in the former, the people are a prey which no-one can save but in the latter, Yahweh can save and deliver them.

Both verbs נצל, מלט occur together in 20:6 and 31:5. In 20:6 the people realize that Egypt can neither save nor deliver them: but in 19:20 Yahweh promises to save even the Egyptians if they turn to him. In ch 36, the Rabshekah questions the power of Yahweh or indeed any god to save and deliver: but in 38:6 (where נצל and גוף occur together) Yahweh proclaims that he can deliver the city. All the texts in which the verb נצל is found are in prose except 5:29 and 31:5.

מלט: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 20:6; 31:5; 34:15; 37:38; 46:2,4; 48:19; 49:24,25; 66:7. The hiphil occurs only in 31:5 and 66:7. The two texts most relevant are 20:6 and 31:5 (see under נצל).

### Verse 6

שוב with the meaning "to repent" is found in Isaiah in 1:27; 6:10; 9:12; 19:22; 31:6; 44:22; 55:7. שובו is in the second person while the rest of the verbs are in the third person. BHS suggests a third person jussive וישובו "and let them return".

עמק: (see 29:15). Watts [408] notes that the verb can be used of the grave in 30:33; of plans of government in 29:15 and of the sign to be proposed in 7:11.

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1. Gonçalves [294] notes that the hiphil is one of the key verbs in 2 Kgs 18:13-20:19.
  2. In Isa 31:5, 1QIsa reads הפליט for MT המליט.

סרה: The verb סרר or the noun סרה occurs in Deut 13:6; 19:16; Isa 1:5; 31:6; Jer 28:16; 29:32. It means "to rebel". The rebellion is always against Yahweh and always expressed verbally. Often it is a false prophet who speaks rebellion (Deut 13:6), specifically <sup>Hananiah</sup> (Jer 28:16) or Shemaiah (Jer 29:32).

בני-ישראל: Although sonship is an important theme in First Isaiah (1:2; 1:4; 30:1,9) and in Second Isaiah (54:1; 57:3; 60:10), the term בני-ישראל (17:3,9; 27:12; 31:6) simply denotes the people in general, or the nation as in the Pentateuch where the phrase occurs most frequently. In Isa 21:17, the people of Kedar are called בני-קרר.

### Verse 7

ביום ההוא resumes the catalogue of positive events that will take place "on that day" (see 28:5; 29:18).

מאס: (see 30:12). A reversal has taken place: instead of rejecting the Torah of Yahweh, the people reject idols.

אלילים: The word אָלִיל or אֱלִל means "worthless" or "ineffective" exemplified by the physicians in Job 13:4, the divination of the false prophet in Jer 14:4 and the worthless shepherd in Zech 11:17. Otherwise, it denotes specifically "idol". It is found with this meaning most often in Isaiah (2:8,18,20; 10:10,11; 19:1,3; 31:7) (1).

In Isaiah, idols are associated with Egypt in 19:1,3: they are worthless before Yahweh. In 10:10,11, just as the idols of Samaria were ineffective when confronted by the Assyrians, so too the idols of

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1. Elsewhere it is found in Lev 19:4; 26:1; Ps 96:5 (=1 Chron 16:26), 97:7; Ez 30:13; Hab 2:18 with the meaning "idol".



Jerusalem are useless when faced with the same challenge. It is in ch 2 where idols are condemned most fiercely and which has many similarities in vocabulary with 31:6-7. In 2:8, the land is filled with idols and men bow down to the work of their hands, *מעשה ידיו* (31:7: *אשר עשו ידיכם*), but the idols will utterly pass away (v18). In that day (2:20 and 31:7: *ביום*), men (*אדם* in 2:20, *איש* in 31:7) will cast away (*שלך* in 2:20 and *מאס* in 31:7) their idols of silver and gold (2:20 and 31:7: *את-אלילי כסף ואת-אלילי-זהב*) which they made for themselves (2:20: *אשר עשו לבם* and 31:7: *אשר עשו לו*).

Not only is the vocabulary of 2:8,18,20 similar to 31:7 but also the contrast between God and man is highlighted in both chapters. In ch 2, idols are rejected because they are simply the creation of man, the reflection of his pride and arrogance. Yahweh alone will be exalted and he will destroy the pride of men. In ch 31:3, the Egyptians are men and not God: their horses are flesh and not spirit. Assyria will be defeated not by a sword of man but by the sword of Yahweh (v8).

Isa 31:6-7, although an addition, shares the same emphasis upon the weakness of man and the power of God which is present in the rest of the chapter.

*אשר עשו לבם ידיכם*: A similar phrase occurs in Isa 2:8,20; 17:8; 31:7. In all cases, the phrase refers to idols, the creation of man. In 17:8, the people no longer look to (*שעה*) the work of their hands but they look to their creator (*עֲשֵׂהוּ*), the Holy One of Israel. The same distinction is made in 17:8 and 31:6-7: the people reject the work of their hands and look towards Yahweh. But in 31:1, they do not look towards (*שעה*) the Holy One of Israel nor consult him. Rather they look towards Egypt which is "non-god", "non-spirit": Egypt becomes an idol which for the Judeans replaces Yahweh.

Egypt is of no significance and is only an ineffective substitute, in comparison to Yahweh. The sustained God-Man contrast throughout ch 31 leads up to the picture of Yahweh as mighty king in 32:1f.

חטא: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 1:4; 29:21; 42:24; 43:27; 64:4; 65:20. The noun חטא occurs in 1:18; 31:7; 38:17; 53:12. The noun חטאת occurs in Isa 1:28; 13:9; 33:14. The noun חטאת occurs in 5:18 and חטאת in 3:9; 6:7; 30:1; 43:24,25; 44:22; 58:1; 59:2,12.

Within chs 28-33, the root occurs in 29:21; 30:1; 31:7; 33:14 but no useful links can be established between them. The root is not associated with idols elsewhere in Isaiah and the word in 31:7 is probably an addition [Wildberger: 1237]. Irwin [116] sees יְרֵכֶם חטא as a "construct chain with intervening suffix". He translates it as "your sinful hands."

### Verse 8

נפל (see 31:3).

אשור: The oracle against Assyria (v8-9) forms an *inclusio* with the oracle against those who go down to Egypt (v1-3) enclosing Yahweh's defence of Zion as a centre-piece (v4-5). The fall of Assyria (v8: נפל) corresponds to the fall of Egypt and those who rely on her (v3: נפל). Other verbs of destruction in v8 (נס, אכל) correspond to similar verbs in v3 (בלה, כשל). The sword, a symbol of military prowess (v8-9) corresponds to the horses and chariots (v1-3). The Egyptians are men and not God (לא אלה, לא רוח) but the sword that will destroy the Assyrians is of God and <sup>not of</sup> man (לא אדם, לא איש). At the same time, v8-9 offer a contrast to v4-5. The behaviour of the young men and officers in v8 who flee in terror (חתת) from the sword (מחרב) contrasts with the reaction of the band of shepherds in v4 who are not terrified (לא יחת) of

the uproar (מְהוּמוֹם, מְקוֹלָם). The contrast is further underlined by the fact that each of the three words begin with מ-.

In 31:9b, נאם-יהוה is qualified by two further phrases emphasizing Yahweh's association with Zion and Jerusalem. The effect of this is to highlight the fact that it is the same Yahweh who has rescued and saved Jerusalem in v4-5 who now announces the destruction of the Assyrians in v8-9a. Therefore v9b further unites v4-5 to v8-9a.

Of the 34 occurrences of the word אֲשׁוּר in Isaiah, only 10:12; 14:24f; 20:1-6; 27:13 are helpful in the analysis of 31:8. In 10:12f and 14:24f, it is part of Yahweh's plan to destroy Assyria: as in ch 31, the plans of Yahweh are more powerful than the plans of man. In Isa 20:1-6 and 27:13 Assyria and Egypt are mentioned together as in ch 31. In 20:1-6, the Egyptians in whom Judah trusted are led into captivity by the Assyrians. In 27:13, those lost in Assyria or exiled in Egypt shall return to worship Yahweh on Mount Zion.

חֶרֶב: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 1:20; 2:4; 3:25; 13:15; 14:19; 21:15; 22:2; 27:1; 31:8; 34:5-6; 41:2; 49:2; 51:19; 66:16. It often occurs in the context of war (2:4; 21:15; 22:2). In 1:20, 65:12, those who refuse to listen to the word of Yahweh or who forsake him are destined to the sword. Yahweh has a sword (34:6) and this is used in judgment upon Edom (34:5-6), upon the nations (41:2), upon all flesh (66:10) and to destroy Leviathan (27:1).

אֵל: (see 29:8). It occurs with חֶרֶב as subject in 1:20. In 31:8, it is parallel to נָפַל and its meaning is determined from this.

נִסּוּ: (see 30:16,17). It seems strange that since the Assyrian has fallen and been devoured by the sword in v8a, that he is able to flee before the

sword in v8b. Clements [1980a: 258] comments that v8 must be taken as a whole and not as two separate threats. Vermeylen [1977: 423], suggests that the lack of logic can be explained by the anthological nature of the verse. This explanation is preferable to Kaiser's [1974: 317] who sees v8 as coming from two separate authors. Where the verb **נָס** is used in Isaiah, it emphasizes not the action of fleeing but rather the superior power of the oppressor and the reaction he causes. In most cases, the oppressor is Assyria. The verb denotes the reaction of Gibeah before the advance of Assyria in 10:29; it denotes the reaction of the Judeans before Assyria in 10:3; 20:6; 30:16. It also denotes the reaction to the might and anger of Yahweh in 13:14; 24:18; 31:8. The apparent incongruity of v8b after v8a can therefore be explained: whereas Assyria often caused the people to flee, Yahweh now causes the Assyrians to flee, thus emphasizing the power of Yahweh over them. This reversal is clearly seen in the context of ch 30-31. In 30:17, "a thousand flee at the threat of one" (Assyrian) is a threat directed against Judah because she placed her trust in Egypt and not in Yahweh: but it is only Yahweh who can rout the Assyrians (31:8).

**בָּחֹר**: The noun occurs in the singular in 62:5 and in the plural in 9:16; 23:4; 31:8; 40:30.

**סָמ**: The noun is only found in Isa 31:8 in prophetic literature. It occurs in the historical books, particularly in Judges (1) and 1 Kings (2). It denotes subservience as **נָס** does in the context of v8. This connotation of **סָמ** avoids any incongruity between v8a and v8b.

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1. Judg 1:28; 1:30; 1:33; 1:35
  2. 1 Kgs 4:6; 5:27,28; 9:15; 12:18.

Verse 9

סלע: The noun occurs 6 times in Isaiah (2:21; 7:19; 16:1; 22:16; 31:9; 32:2). In 2:21; 7:19; 22:16, it has a literal meaning and in 16:1 it is a proper name, but often (Ps 31:4; 42:10; 71:5) it is used of Yahweh in a metaphorical sense and this may be its significance in Isa 32:2. The presence of the word in 32:2 is generally associated with its occurrence in 31:9. Vermeylen [1977: 424] thinks that the noun in 32:2 is a *reprise* of the motif of the rock in 31:9 and concludes that 32:2 is more recent than 31:9.

מגור: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 31:9 and 66:4. The phrase מסביב, "terror on every side", is more common and is found in Ps 31:14; Jer 6:25; 20:3,4,10; 46:5; 49:29; Lam 2:22. Generally it denotes the dread inspired by news of the approach of the enemy. מגור denotes "fears" in a more personal sense in Isa 66:4 and Ps 34:5; Prov 10:24. In the case of Isa 31:9, it is dread inspired by Yahweh.

עבר: (see 28:18). A further reversal takes place. The Assyrians, represented as "overflowing waters" pass through (עבר) to destroy the leaders of Jerusalem in 28:18-19. In 31:9, it is the Assyrians who pass away (עבר) in terror.

חתת: (see verse 4). The fear of the officers contrasts with the bravery of the shepherds in v4.

נס: (see 30:17). LXX and Vulg read נס, a participle from נס "to flee". In 31:9 the picture of the Assyrian officers deserting the standard before Yahweh contrasts with 5:26 where Yahweh enlists the support of the Assyrian standard. In its more immediate context, it can be contrasted

with the image of Judah left alone like a signal on a hill in 30:17.

נאם-יהוה (see 30:1). In the context of chs 28-33, the phrase occurs in 30:1 and 31:9 and acts as an *inclusio*. While 30:1 opens with Yahweh uttering a threat, 31:9 closes a section with Yahweh offering his support for Zion.

אור occurs in the singular in Isa 31:9; 47:14; 50:11 and Ez 5:2. It means "fire". In the plural (1) it refers to the "Urim". It occurs in the plural in Isa 24:15 but its meaning is obscure. Wildberger [1246-7] traces the struggle to ascertain its meaning beginning from Kimchi and Ibn Ezra's "valley". The noun אור meaning "light" which comes from the same root is very common in Isaiah, particularly Second Isaiah.

תנור: The noun occurs in Isaiah only in 31:9 (2). It is associated with baking and with the heat of the oven either literally (3) or metaphorically (4). In Neh 3:11; 12:38, תנור is a proper name. The nouns אור and תנור are not parallel except in Isa 31:9 and תנור is associated with Yahweh only in 31:9 and Ps 21:10. It is in keeping with its context of the destruction of Assyria: it expresses a destructive force in Hos 7:4-7 also. In Ps 21:10 Yahweh destroys his enemies by fire.

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1. Ex 28:30; Lev 8:8; Num 27:21; Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 28:6; Ez 5:2; Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65.
  2. Elsewhere in Gen 15:17; Lev 2:4; 7:9; 11:35; 26:26; Neh 3:11; 12:38; Ps 21:10; Lam 5:10; Hos 7:4,6,7; Mal 3:19.
  3. Gen 15:17; Lev 2:4; 7:9; 11:35; 26:26.
  4. Ps 21:10; Lam 5:10; Hos 7:4,6,7; Mal 3:19.

## CONTEXT

In spite of the general consensus among scholars that v4 is authentically Isaian and v5 is a later interpretation of v4, a study of the vocabulary and structure does not leave one entirely convinced. Firstly, the authenticity of v4 may be questioned on the grounds that it contains a long unwieldy simile: the introduction of the band of shepherds in v4c adds a new element that is not essential to the simile and at the beginning of v4c נִשְׂרָא sounds repetitive after נִשְׂרָא at the start of v4b. It is difficult to agree with Clements [1980a: 256] who insists that the analogy contained in the simile in v4 is really very simple: Yahweh is the lion, Jerusalem is the prey and the shepherds are those who try to help her, i.e. Egypt and her allies. In fact, there are some indications which suggest that the analogy may not be so straightforward. In earlier texts (Isa 5:29; Jer 4:7; 5:6; 59:17; Joel 1:6), it is the might of the Assyrians and Babylonians which is compared to the lion. In later texts, the image of the lion is used in contexts which favour Israel (Jer 49:11; Hos 10:11; Mic 5:7). The word טָרַף is generally used sympathetically of the righteous who suffer at the hands of the wicked (Job 29:17; Ps 124:6). Would the verb רָגַח which has deceitful and evil undertones ever be used of Yahweh's actions even in a simile?

Furthermore it is dangerous to rely completely upon the construction עַל נִשְׂרָא as proof that v4 is a threat and not a promise. Wildberger [1243], for example, suggests that עַל can be taken with רָגַח and not with נִשְׂרָא.

It may be possible grammatically that in v4 the analogy can be interpreted differently. The lion is Assyria as in 5:29: the prey is Jerusalem as in 5:29: the band of shepherds is Yahweh (note that in v5 Yahweh is similarly compared to a plural group, "fluttering birds").

מלא-רעים may be the subject of לא יחת and לא יענה. If the band of shepherds is Yahweh and he is the subject of לא יחת, then this provides a better contrast with v9 where the verb חתת is also used: the brave action of the shepherds contrasts with the cowardice of the princes who desert the standard. The verb חתת in the expression "do not fear" is often used to instil confidence and trust and not fear and terror (e.g. Deut 1:21; 31:8; Jer 1:17; 10:2). Note also that in 30:31, the phrase כִּי מְקוֹל יְהוָה יַחַת אֲשׁוּר describes how Assyria is terrified at the voice of Yahweh but in 31:4, the band of shepherds (Yahweh) is not terrified at the voice of the lions (Assyria).

It is possible that the core of v4-5 was written together: the lion (v4) and the birds (v5) are found together in images in Hos 11:11 and Amos 3:4,5. Perhaps in Isa 31:4-5, they were also intended to be read together as part of the one image.

The word טרף is found only in 5:29 and 31:4. Yet 5:29 shares vocabulary with both 31:4 and 31:5: נצל, מלט, טרף. The similarity between 5:29 and 31:4-5 should not be overlooked. Are we to believe that Yahweh picks up the role of the oppressor from Assyria as we move from 5:29 to 31:4? Is it consistent with Isaian theology that Assyria, the instrument of Yahweh, is to be replaced by the equally oppressive action of Yahweh - or does such a dramatic intervention, as Kaiser [1974: 318] suggests, belong to a later apocalyptic approach?

Finally a look at the vocabulary of 31:4-5 shows that both verses should be taken together and may show literary dependence on 5:29. They share similarities with later texts rather than earlier ones:



- הגה: used to denote the sound of a bird or animal in 38:14; 59:11 but is not found in First Isaiah.
- אריה: occurs in 11:7; 15:9; 35:9: all are late texts.
- כפיר: only occurs in 5:29; 11:6; 31:4. 11:6 is late and there may be literary dependence of 31:4 on 5:29.
- טרף: only in 5:29 and 31:4.
- מלא: not used elsewhere in Isaiah meaning a group.
- רעים: only in 13:20 and 56:11 which are both late.
- יחת: means "break" (7:8; 8:9; 9:3). When it means "to fear", the texts are late (20:5; 30:31; 31:9; 37:27; 51:7).
- ענה: never elsewhere in First Isaiah but 7 times in Second Isaiah.
- גבעה: found in late texts in First Isaiah (30:25) and 7 times in Second Isaiah.

On the grounds of the associations in vocabulary it is highly unlikely that the verses come from Isaiah.

Within chs 28-33, Assyria is mentioned by name only twice - 30:31 and 31:8: in both cases her destruction is assured. The presence of Assyria and the threat that it presents are implied in 28:11; 28:14-18; 29:1-4; 30:13-14,17.

Within chs 28-33, 31:8-9 represent the last words of Isaiah (speaking for Yahweh) concerning Assyria just as 31:1-3 are the last words of Isaiah concerning Egypt. Therefore, the editor of ch 31 wished to draw a parallel between the fate of Egypt and that of Assyria.

A resolution or denouement takes place within ch 31. The Assyrian threat is implicit at the start of the chapter - the Judeans seek help from Egypt to counter it but assistance must be sought in Yahweh who can effectively deliver Zion from danger (v4b) and keep on protecting it (expressed by the image of the hovering birds). He will also remove the threat of Assyria which is the crux of the problem (v8-9). V4-5, which describe Yahweh's protection of Zion and Jerusalem and the just within, are flanked on either side by descriptions of how Yahweh deals with the wicked symbolized by Egypt (v1-3) and Assyria (v8-9). As Carroll points

out [1978: 303], Assyria is a cipher or symbol which threatens the existence of Zion or the community's well-being: Assyria is the symbol of Zion's ultimate enemy prefigured in each actual enemy. Thus with the removal of Egypt and Assyria and the protection of Zion assured, ch 32 is free to dispense with external threats from the wicked and to concentrate on building up inner values such as justice and righteousness (1), trust and peace.

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1. In 28:16-17b the security of Zion (ch 31) rests upon justice and righteousness (ch32).

**Chapter 6**

**ISAIAH 32**

## Chapter 6

ISAIAH 32Isaiah 32: 1-8

## INTRODUCTION

The view that 32:1-8 comes from Isaiah [Duhm: 210] has long been abandoned. At the other extreme, a second century dating (1) as suggested by Brückner [54] when there were intense apocalyptic expectations is not considered either. Between these two extremes, fall a variety of possible dates: Barth [215] dates the section to the reign of Josiah. Wildberger [1266] dates it to around 500 BC; but most scholars opt for a later post-exilic date (Cheyne [176], Kaiser [1974: 324], Vermeulen [1977: 424-5]), but precise dating has proved elusive.

Duhm [210-11] connects 32:1-5 with 11:1f; 2:2f, and interprets it messianically. Hermisson [57] sees v1-2 as a messianic text and argues that v3-5 are a later expansion of v2. Mowinckel [1956: 17, 174] sees v1-5 as a wisdom poem which describes in general terms the blessings to be enjoyed during the reign of a righteous king. He links the poem to customary oriental concepts about kingship and cites as a biblical parallel "the last words of David" in 2 Sam 23:1f. Other significant voices have supported or developed this view. Eichrodt [199] draws attention to the just rule of the king as a notion at home among wisdom teachers (Prov 16:12; 20:26; 25:5; 29:4,14; 31:8) and sees in the nature similes of v2 the language of didactic poetry. Fohrer [1967a: 123] describes the passage as a *Wort eines Weisheitslehrers* and Scott [342] and Kaiser [1974: 321] agree with this. Wildberger [1251-2] recognizes that there are wisdom

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1. In 32:2 a parallel has been noted with Hesiod, "Works and Days" 589 and Virgil, "Georgics" III, 145 where similar images of the rock occur [Kaiser 1974: 322].

elements in the poem but argues that it is to be understood as prophecy. Roberts [1983: 129] makes the point that while Yahweh's punishment is carried out by Assyria, an active role is assigned to the human community in the coming age of salvation: the establishment of just government leads to a transformation in society.

Commentators note the links between 32:1-8 and chs 28-31. Wildberger [1107] points to the similarity between v3 and 29:18 and Kaiser [1974: 323] sees v3 linked to 6:9-10 by way of 29:9f. Marti [233-4] sees the passage as an intentional conclusion to the booklet chs 28-31 analogous to 9:2f, 11:1f, i.e. prophecies of salvation which conclude earlier collections. Skinner [255-6] proposes that v1f were inserted into their present context in order to provide an intentional contrast to the previous passages which portray the irreligious and unscrupulous nobility. Barth [208 and 213] followed by Clements [1980a: 259] adopt a similar position. Barth's thesis is that v1-5 (together with 28:23-29; 29:8; 30:27-33; 31:5,8b,9; 32:15-20) stem from the AR. He rejects the interpretation that 32:1f has a general sense and argues that it refers to a specific set of circumstances. The AR is describing the monarchic state and officials who, in contrast to former kings and officials, are to be honest preservers of Yahweh's ordinances. For Barth, this section has nothing to do with wisdom: rather the AR has taken up the Jerusalem royal ideology (in v1a) and motifs from the Zion tradition. The date of this section is pre-exilic and Josianic and written with the figure of Josiah in mind.

Against Barth's hypothesis, it can be said that:

- (a) From the point of view of vocabulary, few words from v1-5 correspond to other so-called AR passages. Any connections between v1-8 must be made with the Book of Proverbs or

with late passages in Isaiah.

- (b) In the light of the general axiom in Prov 8:15-16, it is difficult to see v1 as having a specific application.
- (c) Barth does not draw a parallel between 32:1-8 and 29:17-24 and so excludes the similarities between both passages and the possibility of a similar dating.
- (d) Barth does not take into account texts which are similar to 32:2. He claims that 28:2 (which is similar to 32:2) comes from Isaiah while 32:2 is the creation of the AR. It is difficult to maintain a pre-exilic origin for 32:2 since the other parallel texts, 4:6 and 25:4-5, which Barth does not discuss, are late post-exilic.
- (e) Barth's AR conclusion of the book is 32:1-5,15-20 but he comes to this conclusion through a manipulation of the text. He retains v19 as part of the original conclusion (against many scholars) and sees in it an anti-Assyrian reference. He finds a royal figure in v15a by understanding the phrase *עֲרָה עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ מִמְרוֹם* not as "an outpouring of the spirit" on the people but as "the spirit will be revealed" (*עֲרָה* in the sense of *גִּלָּה*) to the king, a motif present in 11:2 "and the spirit of Yahweh will rest on him". Barth's assertion that v1-5,15-20 conclude the AR redaction is therefore very doubtful. It is better to situate the passage in the struggle between the righteous and the evil in late post-exilic Judaism.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 1

הֵן: The particle occurs in First Isaiah 3 times (23:13; 32:1; 33:7) and in Second Isaiah 22 times. Apart from isolated instances in Jer 2:10; 3:1; Ez 18:4; Hag 2:12, it is not found elsewhere in prophetic literature. In the (late) texts of 23:13; 33:7, the particle means "behold". It retains this meaning throughout Second Isaiah with the possible exception of 54:15 where it means "when". In some cases, הֵן has the meaning "if". There is a semantic development from "behold" to "look (in your mind's eye) at", "consider the possibility of" and therefore to "if".

It occurs 27 times in the Pentateuch with the meaning "behold" (1). It occurs 30 times in the Book of Job with the meaning "behold" and twice with the meaning "if" (12:14,15). It occurs twice in Proverbs 11:31 (meaning "if") and in 24:12.

The meaning of הן, then, throughout the OT generally is "behold". When the word specifically means "when" or "if", the apodosis follows closely, e.g. Job 12:14,15; Prov 11:31; Isa 54:15; Jer 3:1. Scott [342] and Irwin [120] suggest that it means "if" in 32:1 but the majority of commentators including Procksch [410], Vermeylen [1977: 424], Barth [259] and Clements [1980a: 260], translate it as "behold".

מִלֵּךְ: The verb occurs 3 times in Isaiah: 24:23; 32:1; 52:7. In 24:23 and 52:7, the subject of the verb is Yahweh. The verb is rarely found elsewhere in prophetic literature. Apart from the prose sections of Jeremiah, e.g. 23:5; 37:1; 52:1, where the usage is the same as in the Book of Kings and Chronicles, the verb occurs in Ez 20:33 and Mic 4:7 and in the hiphil in Hos 8:4. In Ez 20:33 and Mic 4:7, Yahweh is the subject of the verb. He is always the subject of the verb when it occurs in the Psalms (47:9; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; 146:10).

מִלֵּךְ occurs twice in Proverbs (8:15 and 30:22). Prov 8:15 has many similarities in vocabulary with Isa 32:1:

Isa 32:1:

הוּא לַצֶּדֶק יִמְלֹךְ-מֶלֶךְ לְשָׁרִים לְמִשְׁפַּט יִשְׂרָאֵל

Prov 8:15-16:

בִּי מַלְכִּים יִמְלֹכוּ וְרוּחוֹנִים יַחְקֻקוּ צֶדֶק  
בִּי שָׁרִים יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנֹדִיבִים כָּל-שִׁפְטֵי צֶדֶק

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1. KB [238] states that הן can refer to a noun or phrase which precedes it, e.g. Gen 3:22; 4:14.

מֶלֶךְ: Apart from chs 36-39, the noun is found in First Isaiah 17 times (1). In all cases, with the exception of 32:1, the identity of the king is easily recognizable. In 6:5, 8:21, 33:17,22, the king referred to is Yahweh (2). In 7:17; 8:4,7; 10:12; 20:1,4,6, the king in question is the king of Assyria: in 14:4, it is the king of Babylon and in 7:1, 14:28, it is Ahaz. Isa 7:6 concerns the setting up of the son of Tabeel as king. Isa 23:15 merely uses the image of the king as a simile. Only in 32:1 is the identity of the king left vague and anonymous: the singular מֶלֶךְ is only found with the word שָׂרִים in Isaiah in 32:1. Roberts [1983: 132] interprets the role of the king in the light of chs 9 and 11. Isa 11:1-5 is parallel to the royal Psalms especially Ps 72: the king judges the poor in righteousness and justice (Ps 72:2) and crushes the oppressor (Ps 72:4). His role resembles that imposed on the king in the "last words of David" in 2 Sam 23:3. The king participates in what is really the work of the divine king: Yahweh judges the poor (Ps 10:18) in righteousness (Ps 9:8-9; 67:5; 96:13; 98:9) and slays the wicked (Ps 9:6; 129:4; 145:20). Roberts [1983: 132] notes that metaphors appropriate to the deity are applied to the human king in v2.

שָׂרִים: Most commentators [see Wildberger 1250] delete ל on the grounds that it was mistakenly inserted along with the ל before צַרַק and מִשְׁפָּט. Procksch [410], however, suggests that the phrase should read וְלוֹ שָׂרִים, "to him the princes belong".

The noun שָׂר appears 12 times in First Isaiah (3). It occurs 3 times in Second Isaiah (43:28; 49:7,23). It only appears with מֶלֶךְ in the singular in

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1. Isa 6:5; 7:1,6,17; 8:4,7,21; 10:12; 14:4,28; 20:1,4,6; 23:15; 32:1; 33:17,22.
  2. מֶלֶךְ occurs three times in Second Isaiah where it always refers to Yahweh (41:21; 43:15; 44:6).
  3. Isa 1:23; 3:3,4,14; 10:8; 19:13; 21:5; 23:8; 30:4; 31:9; 32:1; 34:12.



32:1 but it appears with the plural מלכים in 10:8; 49:7 and the feminine form שרות appears with מלכים in 49:23.

When שרים refers to authority in Judah, it has negative connotations (1:23; 3:3,4,14). In 19:13 and 30:4 the princes of Egypt are seen as futile and helpless. The princes of Assyria are first seen as haughty in 10:8 but later as cowards in 31:9. Isa 32:1 is the only text where the שרים are without fault.

Elsewhere in prophetic literature, the word שרים is grouped along with the word מלך in the prose passages of Jeremiah (4:9; 17:25; 36:21; 49:38); in Hos 3:4 (also a prose passage), and in Hos 8:10; 13:10. In many of these texts the authority of the king and princes is portrayed as vulnerable and insecure. In Jer 17:25, however, kings and princes will once again sit on the throne of David if the people listen to Yahweh and observe the rules concerning the Sabbath.

ישרו: The form (third person imperfect plural) from the root שרר appears only twice - in Isa 32:1 and Prov 8:16. A slightly different form יסר found in 1 Chron 15:22 may also come from the same root. A participle from the root is found in Esth 1:22, and the hithpael form השתרר occurs in Num 16:3 but in form and meaning only Isa 32:1 and Prov 8:16 are identical.

צרק: The preposition ל is found with צרק only in Isa 32:1. The noun צרק appears in First Isaiah 8 times (1) and the noun צרקה occurs 10

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1. Isa 1:21,26; 11:4,5; 16:5; 26:9,10.

times (1). Olley [447] notes that ל occurs with צדקה 4 times and with משפט 22 times in the OT. In Isaiah he notes that ל followed by either of these nouns refers to a function (Isa 34:5; 49:1; 54:7; Ps 122:5). Such parallels suggest that in Isa 32:1 לצדק and למשפט refer not to quality but to function and purpose.

משפט: The preposition ל occurs with משפט in 5:7; 28:26; 32:1; 34:5. The noun appears in First Isaiah 18 times (2).

The terms משפט and צדק(ה) occur parallel in 1:21; 5:7,16; 9:7; 16:5; 32:16-17; 33:5. A king, a descendant of David, acts with justice and righteousness in 9:7; 11:4; 16:5 but the שרים never act with משפט as they do in 32:1. Yahweh is associated with justice and righteousness in 3:14; 4:4; 5:16; 28:6,17; 30:18; 33:5 but in none of these texts is he portrayed as a king. Justice and righteousness are often the means of punishment used by Yahweh (4:4; 5:16; 10:22; 26:9-10; 28:17; 30:18; 34:5). The two terms are often associated in First Isaiah with social concerns (1:17,21; 3:14; 5:7,23; 10:2; 11:4-5; 16:5; 28:6; 32:7).

The closest parallels with the terms משפט and צדקה in 32:1 are found in 9:7, 11:4 and 16:5 where these qualities are associated with the king - yet with some notable differences:

- (a) In 32:1, a king *and* princes rule according to justice and righteousness.
- (b) In 9:6; 11:1; 16:5, the king is specifically identified as a descendant of David or as a sprig from the root of Jesse. In 32:1 the king is not identified in this way.

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1. Isa 1:27; 5:7,16,23; 9:6; 10:22; 28:17; 32:16,17; 33:5.  
 2. Isa 1:17,21,27; 3:14; 4:4; 5:16; 9:6; 10:2; 16:5; 26:8,9; 28:6,17,26; 30:18; 32:1,7,16; 33:5; 34:5.

- (c) The king in 9:6f; 11:1f; 16:5 is described in suitable royal language and imagery while in 32:1 he is a non-descript figure (1), associated with the שָׂרִים. The presence of the princes is explained by Kaiser [1974: 321] in the following way: the wisdom redactor, responsible for this passage, was anxious to introduce a realistic feature into the portrait of a Messianic Age. According to the conceptions of the wisdom redactor, kings in the Messianic Age will be real kings in a real kingdom and so will not be able to do without officials who rule righteously like himself. The king does not feature again after v1. The three images in verse 2 are not typical images used of a king.
- (d) The emphatic position given to צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט suggests that they are key words in the verse; they reappear in 32:7,16,17. As in Prov 8:15-16, the structure of the verse seems to indicate that the king and princes serve as examples of justice and righteousness in the same way that they serve as an example of wisdom in Prov 8:15-16.

To sum up: the normal subject of the verb מָלַךְ is Yahweh (Isa 24:23; 52:7) but although he is not named specifically in 32:1, he may be alluded to, considering the normal referents of the images in v2. Despite the similarities with 9:6f; 11:1f; 16:5, the noun מָלַךְ is not to be identified with the royal figure in those passages. The idea of the princes ruling in righteousness is foreign to the Book of Isaiah and contradicts their behaviour in 1:23; 3:3,4,14. The only text which offers a parallel to 32:1 in vocabulary and theme is Prov 8:15-16. Therefore, Isa 32:2, like Prov 8:15-16, acts as a general statement illustrating the importance of justice and righteousness rather than any specific tradition or interpretation of kingship.

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1. The pallid figure of the king in 32:1 has been noted particularly by Cheyne [173] and Procksch [410].

Verse 2

וְהָיָה-אִישׁ: The phrase reads as an anti-climax after v1. The form וְהָיָה, often found as a redactional link, is inelegant here and אִישׁ is insipid and pallid coming after מֶלֶךְ and שָׂרִים in v1. Does אִישׁ refer to the king or princes or both? The distinction made between Yahweh and the Egyptians in 31:3 and the Assyrians in 31:8 together with the fact that the vocabulary of 32:2 is associated with Yahweh makes it tempting to see the divine-human distinction continued into 32:1-2 (1).

מַחְבֵּא is a hapax legomenon. The hiphil of the verb חָבֵא occurs in Isa 49:2 where it has the same meaning as the noun in 32:2 (2).

רוּחַ (see 28:6). The noun occurs 24 times in First Isaiah but only in six cases, does it mean "wind" or "storm" (7:2; 11:15; 17:13; 25:4; 27:8; 32:2). It generally forms part of a simile or metaphor. In three instances (11:15; 17:13; 27:8), Yahweh uses a scorching wind to punish or destroy. In only one instance is Yahweh explicitly described as a shelter from the storm: the text is 25:4 and the storm is the "storm of the ruthless" רוּחַ-עֲרִיצִים (3). The word עֲרִיצִים, found three times in 25:3-5, occurs in First Isaiah elsewhere only twice, in 13:11 and 29:20. The storm in 32:2

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1. Laberge [1978: 80] notes that the LXX makes use of Isa 60:2 in interpreting 32:2. In the LXX there is a more marked insistence on the marvellous character of the protection accorded by Yahweh. The LXX passes from a consideration of the protection accorded by man (MT) to a consideration of the protection which comes from on high to Zion (LXX).
  2. Laberge [1978: 80] discusses why the LXX translates רוּחַ as τούς λογους only in Isa 32:2. He decides that just as the Targum often translates רוּחַ by מִימְרָא, so in 32:2, the LXX translates רוּחַ by λογος.
  3. It is possible, as BHS suggests, that the whole line in which the phrase רוּחַ-עֲרִיצִים occurs in 25:4 is an addition. Kaiser [1974: 196] and Vermeulen [1977: 364] see it as the work of a glossator.

is not identified but only here and in 25:4 is the theme of shelter from the storm found.

סתר: (see 28:15). The contrast between 28:15,17 and 32:2 is striking: 28:15,17 refer to the refuge of the leaders of Jerusalem, a refuge of lies which is destroyed by justice and righteousness in v17; but 32:2 refers to the shelter from the hail which can be found in justice and righteousness in v1.

פלגי-מים (see 30:25).

צִיּוֹן occurs only in 25:5 and 32:2. The LXX translates the word as Zion. Laberge [1978: 81] thinks that this is due to an association of the stream of water in 32:2 with the waters which make glad the city of God in Ps 46:5.

צל: (see 30:2-3).

סלע: (see 31:9).

כבד is an adjective meaning "heavy". It occurs in Isa 32:2 and in a construct form in 1:4.

עיף: (see 29:8).

The vocabulary of v2, then, would suggest that the four similes refer indirectly to Yahweh. Kaiser [1974: 311-2] notes that the similes are "artificial" and this is true in that they seem to find their natural contexts in the other places they occur rather than here. The closest

parallels are with Isa 4:6; 16:3-4; 25:4-5.

When its vocabulary, style and position are considered within v1-8, v2 may appear somewhat incongruous. Its closest ties are with 4:6; 25:4; 28:2,15,17. Isa 4:6 is generally seen as a somewhat awkward addition which seeks to interpret 4:1-5 (Duhm [33], Kaiser [1983: 88], Vermeylen [1977: 151-2], Clements [1980a: 52-3]). Isa 25:4 is generally assigned to the work of a glossator because it disrupts 25:1-5 and part of it is absent from the LXX. The third text 28:2 has close similarities with 32:2. It is generally seen as an addition to the woe oracle against Ephraim in 28:1-4 and takes its vocabulary from 28:15,17 [Vermeylen 1977: 387]. The images in 28:2 are reversed in 32:2 and the style of both verses is the same:

Isa 28:2

הנה חזק ואמץ לארני בְּזֶרֶם בְּרֵד שֶׁעַר קֹטֵב  
בְּזֶרֶם מִים כְּבִירִים שִׁטְפִים הִנִּיחַ לָאָרֶץ בִּיד

Isa 32:2

וְהָיָה אִישׁ בְּמַחְבֵּא-רוּחַ וְסֹתֵר זֶרֶם  
בְּפִלְגֵי-מִים בְּצִיּוֹן בְּצֵל סֶלַע-כֶּבֶד בָּאָרֶץ עִיפָה

The verb נוח and the noun עִיף occur together in 28:12 in Yahweh's command to give rest to the weary. In 32:2, he is a shade in a weary land and in 32:18, his people abide in quiet resting places.

The following contrasts can be drawn between 28:2 and 32:2: they show how Yahweh harnesses the forces of nature in favour of the just and against the wicked:

<u>32:2</u>	<u>28:2</u>
סתר-זרם	כזרם-ברר
כפלגי-מים	כזרם מים כבירים שפטים

Each of the images in 32:2 is elsewhere applied to Yahweh. Isa 32:2 may come from the same hand that was responsible for adding 28:2. The addition in 28:2 connects the fate of Ephraim with that of Jerusalem (28:14-18). Both oracles are specifically applied to their respective leaders; but 32:2, on the other hand, is a complete reversal of this. When Yahweh is the leader, there is true security. This implies that the author of 32:2 interpreted the king in v1 as Yahweh.

### Verse 3

שעה: (see 31:1). [BHS offers minor variations based on Vulg and Syr. In particular, the hophal form, opted for by Clements [1980a: 260] is attractive but this form does not occur elsewhere in the OT]. תשעינה is the third imperfect plural feminine form from the root שעה "to see", "have regard for". The verb in 32:2 is closest in meaning to the verb in 17:7-8 and 31:1. There is a similar verb from the root שעע, found in Isa 6:10; 29:9. The most common meaning of this verb is "to be pleasing" or "to delight in"; it is used particularly for "the Law is my delight" in Ps 119 but in Isa 6:10 and 29:9 it means "to be blind". In both these contexts it is a question of figurative blindness. In 32:3, since לא תשעינה occurs parallel to תקשבנה, it is better to translate it as "not closed" from the root שעע. However, because of the rare use of both the roots שעע and שעה in Isaiah and because of the uncertainty as to whether their derivatives spring from the same root, it is useful to link both verbs together when they occur in Isaiah so that Isa 32:3 may look

back to 29:9 *and* to 31:1.

קשב: (see 28:23). Like שעה in 17:7-8 and 31:1b, the verb קשב denotes an activity that has to do with Yahweh. The whole verse relates to paying attention and listening to Yahweh.

#### Verse 4

לב: The noun לב or לבב occurs 19 times in First Isaiah (1). It occurs 22 times in Second Isaiah (2). The closest cluster of words, similar to 32:4a, is found in 6:9-10 where ידע, בין, לבב occur. The only other occurrence of a similar phrase is in 35:5, נמהרי-לב. The phrase in 32:3 is similar in theme to some texts in Second Isaiah where the noun לב occurs, e.g. 42:25; 44:19,20; 46:12; 47:10; 57:1; 63:17.

מהר: The niph'al of the root occurs only in Job 5:13; the niph'al participle in Isa 32:4; 35:5; Hab 1:6 but the noun מהרה occurs in Isa 5:26; 16:5; 58:8 and the piel of the verb is found in 5:19; 8:1; 32:4; 49:17; 51:14; 59:7. It is tempting to connect 32:4 with 5:19 where the people are taunting Yahweh to speed his work that they may see and know it; but in the context of 32:3-4, the phrase is parallel to "the eyes of those who see", "the ears of those who hear", "the heart of those who are in a hurry", "the tongue of the stammerers" (3).

לשון: (see 28:11).

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1. Isa 1:5; 6:9,10; 7:2,4; 9:8; 10:7,12; 13:7; 14:13; 15:5; 19:1; 24:7; 29:13; 30:29; 32:4,6,8; 35:4.
  2. Isa 40:2; 41:22; 42:25; 44:19,20; 46:8,12; 47:7,8,10; 49:21; 51:7; 57:1,11,15,17; 60:5; 61:1; 63:17; 65:14,17; 66:14.
  3. A somewhat similar list occurs in Prov 6:16-18.



The noun עלגים is a hapax legomenon but is generally translated in the context as "stammerers" [RSV].

צחחות: The singular is found in Cant 5:10; Isa 18:4; Jer 4:11; but the plural is a hapax legomenon in 32:4 and even here BHS suggests it should be deleted on metrical grounds.

### Verse 5

נבל: In Isaiah נבל occurs only in 32:6. The only other occurrence in prophetic literature is in Jer 17:11 where the fool accumulates riches but not by right, a context not unlike that of Isa 32:1-8. When the word occurs in the Psalms, it denotes the wicked or impious (Ps 14:1; 39:9; 74:18,22). In Proverbs, it has a more general and flexible sense. In the plural, the word is used twice with sexual overtones (2 Sam 13:13; Job 2:10) and once it is used of the false prophets in Ez 13:3.

The noun נבלה occurs twice in Isaiah in 9:16 and 32:6. In 7 out of the other 9 times it occurs in the OT (1) it has sexual overtones. Once, it refers to an individual, presumably the epitome of folly, in 2 Sam 13:12 and in Job 42:8, Yahweh accuses Job's friends of folly specifically because

"they have not spoken of me what is right as my servant has."

This is similar to Isa 32:6b where the fool

"utters error concerning the Lord."

In Isa 9:16, 32:6, נבלה is something spoken. In 9:16 the godless and evildoer, חנף ומרע, are parallel to the phrase "every mouth speaks evil", כל-פה רבר נבלה. In 32:6, the fool speaks folly (נבלה ירבר) and "does evil and godlessness" (יעשה און לעשות חנף). Therefore both contexts of the

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1. Gen 34:7; Deut 22:21; Josh 7:15; Judg 19:23,24; 20:10; 1 Sam 25:25; 2 Sam 13:12; Jer 29:23.

word נבלה are similar.

נריב: In Isaiah, the noun occurs in 13:2 and 32:5,8. In the vast majority of cases in the OT, the word means a nobleman or prince (1). Perhaps one can make a slight distinction and suggest that in Ex 35:5,22; 1 Chron 28:21; 2 Chron 29:31; Prov 19:6, it denotes a generous or willing spirit. Only in Prov 17:7 is the same contrast highlighted between the fool and the noble as is found in 32:5. In Prov 17:26, a parallel is drawn between the righteous צדיק and the noble נריב.

כלי is a hapax legomenon.

שוע occurs only in Job 34:19 and Isa 32:5. Job 34:18-19, while obscure, is interesting. In it the following parallels occur:

Job 34:18	מלך	נריבים
Job 34:19	נכר-שוע	שרים

In this context the rare word שוע denotes a prince. These two verses contain 4 key words found in Isa 32:1,5. In Prov 17:7, שרים and נריבים are parallel so that נריב can also denote a nobleman. Therefore נריב and שוע in 32:5 tie up closely with 32:1.

The presence of עור in v5 implies a change from the present situation. The noble and the prince are at present the fool and the knave. The point of v5 is to offer a wisdom interpretation of v1. V5 plays a pivotal role in v1-8 because it anticipates v8. In other words, the vocabulary of v5 is ambiguous: on the one hand it refers back to the princes in v1 and on the other hand it begins to spell out what it means to be noble - a lesson reiterated in v8 where the word נריב is stressed.

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1. Num 21:18; 1 Sam 2:8; Job 12:21; 21:28; 34:18; Ps 47:9; 83:12; 107:40; 113:8; 118:9; 146:3; Prov 8:16; 17:7; 25:7; Isa 13:2.

Verse 6

יַעֲשֶׂה אֱוֹן (1): (see 29:20).

עָנָו: The verb occurs in Isa 24:5 (2). The noun עָנָו occurs in Isa 9:16; 10:6; 33:14 (3). The noun עָנָו occurs in Isa 32:6; 33:14; Jer 23:15.

In Isa 10:6, Israel, collectively, is called "an evil nation"; but elsewhere in Isaiah, עָנָו refers to evildoers, denoting a more specific group or even individuals. In 9:16, it is paired with מַרְעָע. In 32:6, it denotes the cunning activity of the knave. In 24:5, it denotes the evil which ensues from breaking the covenant and trespassing the laws of Yahweh.

Elsewhere in the OT, the word is found rarely in prophetic literature: in Jer 3:1,2,9, it denotes the sin of adultery; in Jer 23:15, it denotes the sin of the false prophets. It occurs often in wisdom literature (Job 8:13; 13:16; 15:34; 17:8; 20:5; Prov 11:9) where it refers to the man of evil.

תּוֹעָה: (For the root תָּעָה see 28:7). The noun occurs twice in the OT, in Isa 32:6 and in Neh 4:2 but no similarities exist between the two contexts.

הָרִיק: (see 29:8).

רָעַב: (see 29:8). In 32:6, the word רָעַב has closest parallels, not with the uses of the noun in Isaiah, but with Job 22:7; Prov 25:21 and particularly with Ez 18:7,16 where to alleviate hunger and thirst is the sign of the

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1. 1QIsa reads חוֹשֵׁב probably in the light of the phrase in Ps 36:5; Isa 55:7; 59:7; Ez 11:2.
  2. Elsewhere in Num 35:33; Ps 106:38; Jer 3:1,2,9; Mic 4:11; Dan 11:32.
  3. Elsewhere it occurs in Job 8:13; 13:16; 15:34; 17:8; 20:5; 27:8; 34:34; 36:13; Ps 35:16; Prov 11:9.

just man.

The phrase נפש רעבה occurs in 1 Sam 2:5; Ps 107:5,9,36; 146:7, where it is characteristic of Yahweh to satisfy the hungry.

משקה: In Isaiah משקה occurs only in 32:6. Elsewhere the word is used in a general sense: it frequently refers to drinking vessels (Gen 13:10; 40:21; Lev 11:34; 1 Kgs 10:21; 2 Chron 9:20; Ez 45:15). The hiphil from the same root is found in Isa 27:3; 43:20. In both cases it denotes figuratively Yahweh's goodness to his chosen people. The hiphil is used in the same sense in Ps 78:15; 104:11. In Job 22:7 and Prov 25:21, the hiphil of the verb is parallel to רעב and so these two texts provide the closest parallels to 32:6.

צמא: (see 29:8). The closest texts to 32:6 are 2 Sam 17:29; Prov 25:21; Ps 107:5; Isa 5:13, where צמא and רעב are found together.

חסר: In Isaiah the verb occurs only in 32:6 and 51:14. The closest parallel is with Ez 4:17 where Yahweh deprives the evil of bread and water.

The structure of v6 is interesting. V6a states in general terms that the fool speaks folly and does evil. V6b and v6c, in a series of clauses introduced by ל draw out the specifics of the folly:

נבל נבלה ידבר	לבו יעשה-און
לדבר אל-יהוה תועה	לעשות חנף

A contrast is drawn between the fool in v6 and those in v4:

לשון עלגים תמהר לדבר צחות	לבב נמהרים יבין לדעת
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A similar association of the godless (חנף) with lack of knowledge (רעת) is found in Prov 11:9:

"With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbour, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered."

The fool utters error (תועה) concerning Yahweh but the tongue of the stammerers will speak clearly (צחות). These two words are found contrasted here and both are rare words in Isaiah.

The structure of v6 has the effect of linking it closely to v4. It is an argument against those [Wildberger: 1251] who see v6-8 as having a separate origin from v1-5.

### Verse 7

כלי is a hapax legomenon. Kaiser [1974: 320] and Clements [1980a: 261] see כלי as a word meaning "tools".

זמות: The plural is found only in Job 17:11 and Isa 32:7 where it means "schemes".

יעץ: The verb in 32:7 contrasts with the plan of Yahweh in 28:29 and resumes the theme of the wicked who hide their plan in 29:15.

חבל: The verb occurs in the piel in Qoh 5:5; Cant 2:15; Isa 32:7 and Mic 2:10. Elsewhere in Isaiah, it is found in the qal in 10:27, 13:5, where in both texts the subject is Yahweh.

ענוים: (see 29:19).

שקר: (see 28:15). The context of 32:7 is perhaps closest to Ex 20:6;

23:6-7 where there is similarity in vocabulary (משפט אביוֹנִי, רֹבֵר שֶׁקֶר). The behaviour of the knave in 32:7 acts contrary to the law of Ex 23:6-7. Isa 32:7b has more in common with Ex 23:6-7 and Prov 17:7 than it has with any text in prophetic literature.

### Verse 8

יַעַץ: The verb picks up the same verb in v7a and so the noble נָרִיב is the antithesis of both the fool (v6) and the knave (v7).

קוֹם: (see 28:21).

There are a number of hapax legomena; several examples of words that occur only once in Isaiah but also occur in the rest of the OT; several words that appear very rarely in Isaiah.

### Hapax legomena:

מַחְבֵּא, עֲלֻגִים, צָחוֹת, כִּילִי, מִשְׁקָה, כָּלִי, חֲנֹף, נְרִיבוֹת

### Words occurring once in Isaiah:

The parallel שָׁרִים/מֶלֶךְ (Prov 8:16), יִשְׁרוּ (Prov 8:16), צֶלַע (Psalms, Job), נִבֵּל (Job, Psalms, Jer 17:11), שֹׁעַ (Job 34:19), תּוֹעָה (Neh 4:2), הָרִיק (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Psalms), חֲסֵר (Ez 4:17), זִמּוֹת (Job 17:11), חָבַל (piel) (Qoh 5:5; Cant 2:15; Mic 2:10).

### Words occurring rarely in Isaiah:

צִיּוֹן (25:5), פְּלִגִּי-מִים (30:25), יִמְלֹךְ (24:23), הֵן (23:13; 33:7), שֶׁקֶר (9:14; 28:15), צִמָּא (5:13; 21:4; 29:8), נָרִיב (13:2), לִבִּי-נִמְהָרִים (35:5).

## CONTEXT

Superficially, v1-8 appears to constitute an independent unit: v1 represents a dramatic change in tone from 31:9 and v9 introduces a sudden and abrupt start after v8. Yet, the presence of שָׂרִים in 31:9 and 32:1 and the presence of שָׂא in v2 connect 32:1 with what precedes. The presence of יְקוֹם in 32:8 and קָמָה in v9 may be evidence of an attempt at a smooth transition between both verses. The content of v1-8 echoes preceding material in the book especially the way in which reversals of fortune take place: in v3, those who refuse to see and hear will now do so; in v4, those who are rash will come to understanding; in v4, those who stammer will speak; in v5, the fool and the knave will be seen for what they are. Therefore v1-8 look back to what has already happened and also point forward especially to v15-20.

The שָׂרִים of 32:1 contrast with the שָׂרִים of 31:9. In the context of ch 31, מִלֵּךְ is reminiscent of the other uses of the verb מִלַּךְ in Isaiah (24:23, 52:7) where Yahweh is the subject and where he fights against the enemies of Israel on Mt Zion: a similar theme is found in 31:4-5, 8-9. The might of Yahweh is further stressed in 31:3,8, over the weakness of the Egyptians and the Assyrians. Following upon ch 31, then, it is difficult not to think of Yahweh as the subject of the phrase יִמְלֹךְ-מִלֵּךְ.

Skinner [255] and Barth [214] suggest that v1f were inserted here to provide an intentional contrast to the previous passages which portray the irreligious and unscrupulous nobility. Leadership is an important and recurrent theme throughout the chapters, e.g. 28:1,5,7,14,26; 29:1,10,14; 30:2,4,20; 31:1. Isa 32:1 offers a contrast with the models of leadership in chs 28-31 but antitheses to the undesirable leaders occur before 31:1f. In 28:5-6, Yahweh is contrasted with the leaders of

Ephraim in v1-4. In 28:26,29, the wisdom of Yahweh contrasts with the foolishness of the leaders in 28:14-18. The leadership of Yahweh may also be detected in 29:14,23; 30:18f and in ch 31 the theme of Yahweh as a powerful leader is dominant; it is also present in 33:5-6,17,22. Therefore an alternative to evil or inept forms of leadership in the person of Yahweh is a recurrent and repetitive theme throughout these chapters: 32:1-8 is not the first and only attempt to redress the problem of evil leadership.

Justice and righteousness in 32:1 are picked up partly in 32:7 but more especially in 32:16-17. In 32:7 the plea of the needy must be treated with justice. In 32:16-17, justice and righteousness are associated with quietness and trust. In v17, the result of righteousness is trust, a trust which at the start of the unit in 31:1 had been placed in Egypt and not in Yahweh.

The theme of justice and righteousness is important in chs 28-33. In 28:6, Yahweh is a רוח-משפט and in 30:18 he is a אלהי-משפט. In 33:5, he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness and in 28:17, they are his instruments. In 28:26, the farmer is instructed למשפט by Yahweh. In chs 28-33, Yahweh alone is associated with justice and righteousness. Isa 29:21 and 33:15 concern the fate of the צדיק and in 32:7, משפט is used in the context of the plea of the needy.

The word אש looks back to Assyria in 31:8 and to Egypt in 31:3. The word סלע looks back to and contrasts with the rock in 31:9. There may be a word play on ציין in 32:2 and 31:9 which can be observed in the translation of the LXX. In 31:9 Zion is associated with fire and the furnace while in 32:2 ציין is the antithesis of פלגי-מים. The word רוח in



32:2 has negative effects while in 32:15 it has positive effects. מים in v2 is taken up again in 32:20. The image of the storm (זרם) is resumed by the image of the hail (ברר) in 32:19 (1). The protective aspect conveyed by the similes in v2 continues the theme of protection in 31:4-5. The theme of nature is resumed in v2: Harvel [323] makes the point that the images in v2 represent the four seasons of the year. The מחבא-רוח is necessary in the Autumn when the harsh east winds blow from the desert bringing minute particles of dust which enter one's eyes and ears (v3). The סתר זרם is needed in winter because of the flash floods. The פלגי-מים occur in spring time after the rains. The צל סלע-כבר is needed in the summer when the sun becomes too strong. The theme of nature is sustained in 32:10b,12b-13,15b,20: it is the reason given for the fear and trembling of the complacent daughters. The images used of Yahweh suggest security in 32:2: they point back to the false security sought in Egypt in 31:1 and point towards the ultimate security and peace expressed in 32:18.

The six uses of רוח within chs 28-33 with the exception of 32:2 are all associated with Yahweh. He is a רוח-משפט in 28:6; he pours out a רוח-תרומה in 29:10. Those who seek Egypt's help are not acting according to the spirit of Yahweh (לא-רוח) in 30:1. Egypt is inferior to the spirit of Yahweh (לא רוח) in 31:3. When Yahweh finally pours out his spirit in 32:15, the results are peace and happiness. In 29:24, the תעי-רוח, those who do evil, contrast with the spirit of Yahweh and its effects. On the other hand, רוח in 32:2 is used negatively: it signifies the storm against which Yahweh is a refuge.

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1. Some mss, however, read ברר as וירר. This verb may be used to act as an *inclusio* uniting the material in chs 31-32 since ירר also occurs at the start of ch 31 in v1.

The word סתר outside of 32:12 is found in 28:15,17, where the leaders of Jerusalem seek refuge in lies and falsehood. 32:2 offers an antithesis - Yahweh is now the refuge. In 28:17, Yahweh uses hail and waters to overwhelm the refuge but in 32:2 the opposite idea is expressed: Yahweh is the refuge from the storm and he is like a stream of water. Similarly, 32:2 offers an antithesis to 28:2. In 28:2, Yahweh has one who is like a storm of hail, like a storm of waters. Likewise in 30:21, storm and hail are Yahweh's instruments of punishment. Unlike 28:2,17, water in 30:25 and 32:2 represents prosperity and peace. In 30:2,3, the shadow of Egypt צל-מצרים compares unfavourably with the shadow of a great rock צל סלע-גבר in 32:2.

Apart from 32:2, עֵיף occurs twice in chs 28-33 (28:12 and 29:8). In the latter verse, it is part of the wider simile; in 32:2 it has similarities with 28:9 which expresses Yahweh's command: in 32:2 Yahweh is a shade in a weary land and in 32:18 his people will abide in quiet resting places.

Just as each of the similes used in 32:2 suggest an image of relief and help, so Yahweh carries out what man has not been able to effect in chs 28-31.

Isa 28:9,12,19 describe an unwillingness to hear. Isa 28:23 contains a summons to listen while 29:9-10 continues the theme of the confusion and blindness of the people. Isa 29:18 reverses the imagery. Isa 30:9b returns to the theme of those who refuse to hear, who say to the seers "see not". A reversal again takes place in 30:20-21 when the people see and hear. In 31:1b, the people do not look to Yahweh and once again in 32:3, the theme is reversed. Isa 33:13 issues a further summons to hear and 33:17a,19a,20b continue the theme of seeing. The theme extends to 35:5 and 42:18.

If the woe in 29:15 is disregarded, then each of the other five woe sections (ch 28, ch 29, ch 30, chs 31-32, ch 33) move from a refusal to hear to a willingness to hear. Each woe section resolves within itself the tension created by the prophetic call in 6:9-10.

V4 plays the same function as v3 in that it reverses previous roles. V4 looks back to 28:9-10 to the attempt of Yahweh to make his people understand his message and to the obscure speech in 28:10. However the tension created in 28:9-10 may already have been resolved before 32:4 because in 29:24, those who err in spirit will know understanding and other preoccupations with a lack of understanding are present in 29:14,16. The theme in 32:4 is further developed in 33:19f.

In the immediate context of v1-8, v6 ties up closely with v4. The fool in v6 is seen in the same light as the rash and stammerers in v4. The fool's actions are similar to those who do evil in 29:20-21; but in 32:6, the fate of the fool is not given. On the other hand, those who watch to do evil in 29:20 are cut off but later in 29:24, they come to understanding. The fool, in uttering error concerning Yahweh, only does what the leaders have done (3:12; 9:15; 19:13-14; 28:7). The vocabulary in v6c concerning the hungry and thirsty are not typical of the language used in contexts of social justice. Within chs 28-33, it relates best with the simile applied to the wicked in 29:8.

V7 is parallel to v6. V6 dealt with the hungry and thirsty. V7 deals with the poor and the needy. The words עֲנִיִּים and אֲבִיּוֹנִים, as Kaiser suggests [280], may refer to the persecuted Jews and not to the materially poor (other examples in Isaiah are 11:4; 14:32; 26:6; 29:19). Within chs 28-33, its closest parallel is 29:19 where both words are found.

Isaiah 32: 9-14

## INTRODUCTION

Duhm [212] regarded v9-14 as authentically Isaian but Wildberger [1265] remarks that Duhm's view has had too much influence over subsequent exegetes who have held essentially the same position, e.g. Fohrer [1967a: 127-31], Hermisson [55], Stansell [1983: 5]. Fohrer [127] suggests that v9-14 are the last words of Isaiah and are placed logically at the end of chs 28-32. He locates these verses as coming shortly after 22:1-14 and dates them to 701 BC. Barth [211-2] notes that the section's thematic and historical ties are with 1:4-8 and 22:1-14 and so dates it to 701 also. A significant number of scholars have challenged the 701 dating, Marti [235], Cheyne [179], Kaiser [1974: 328], Wildberger [1765-6], Vermeylen [1977: 426]. Central to many of their arguments is the presence of the three Aramaic imperatives which need not be emended since they present no problem textually. Wildberger [1265] and Vermeylen [1977: 426] take the passage to refer to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC, Vermeylen suggesting that v14 is an addition which turns v9-13 into a lament *post eventum*. He suggests that v14 does not fit into the 4+4 metre pattern of v9-13 and that מְשֹׁשׁ in v14 is really a *reprise* of the same word in v13. V14 was added after the event to put the theme of the illusory confidence of the daughters in rapport with the popular belief in the absolute inviolability of the city. V14, according to Vermeylen [1977: 426], is an exilic verse which comes from the same hand as 5:14.

Clements [1980a: 261] also suggests that v9-14 is a lament *post eventum*, the purpose of which was to interpret the fall of Jerusalem. Quite a few commentators have observed the interpretative role that

these verses play. Wildberger [1271] argues that, whatever the origins of v9-14, it has now lost its original context and any attempt to recover the significance of v9-14 as an isolated unit is futile. He stresses that v9-14 is given meaning only by its present position between v1-8 and v15-20. Kaiser [1974:327], although he gives the passage a second century dating, also stresses the interpretative nature of these verses. He argues that a religious meaning can only be attached to them as a result of their position between v1-8 and v15-20. By itself, v9-14 lacks a real reproach (1).

The author of v9-14, according to Kaiser [1974: 331], reinterpreted 24:7f in order to place the prophecy of salvation against a background of gloom; 32:15f were intended to form the sequel to v9-14.

Scott [342] suggests that v9-14 were placed here after v1-8 because of the influence of wisdom writers (he sees v9 as a wisdom formula). Barth alone [211-2] suggests that v1-8 and v15-20 serve to interpret v9-14; most commentators would suggest the opposite order. It would appear that the real significance of v9-14 is its position between v1-8, v15-20. The wider context gives meaning to the summons to attention in v9 and to the weak reproach. The vocabulary of v9-14 does not pick up v1-8 or v15-20; its links are rather with 24:7f. Therefore it seems that this piece, detached from its original position, is now used to interpret v1-8, v15-20.

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 9

שָׁמַיִם: The plural appears in 3:12; 4:1; 27:11; 32:9; but the closest parallel

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1. The weak reproach of בְּטָחוֹת/שְׁאֵנוֹת is given greater emphasis, however, when seen within the wider context of chs 28-33.

is with Jer 9:19. The word בנות is found in 3:16,17; 4:4; 16:2; 32:9. In 3:16,17; 4:4, the בנות are identified as the daughters of Zion. In 16:2 the daughters are identified as the daughters of Moab. Elsewhere, בנות are normally specified e.g. in the phrase "daughters of Zion" in Ps 48:12; 97:8.

Unlike 3:16,17, the בנות are directly addressed in 32:9 and their crime is different and less specific. Wildberger [1267] takes the women and daughters as representatives of the nation and not professional mourning women.

שׁוֹנֵן: The word שׁוֹנֵן occurs only in the pe'lal form of the verb and as a noun [KB 937]. It occurs 15 times in the OT, 5 of which are in First Isaiah (32:9,11,18; 33:20; 37:29). Living securely is portrayed both negatively and positively. In Job 12:5; Ps 123:4; Isa 32:9,11; 37:29; Jer 48:11; Amos 6:1; Zech 1:15, שׁוֹנֵן denotes smugness and self-assurance; often it is the calm before a storm, e.g. Isa 32:9,11; 37:29; Jer 48:11; Amos 6:1. In these texts, the illusion of security is quickly destroyed.

In Job 3:18; 21:23; Prov 1:33; Isa 32:18; 33:20; Jer 30:10 (=46:27), שׁוֹנֵן denotes security and rest in a positive sense – the security to which those presently enduring suffering can look forward.

In Isaiah, שׁוֹנֵן has negative connotations in 32:9,11 but is more positive in 32:18, 33:20. It is parallel to בטח only in 32:9,11,18. There is, therefore, a close connection between the beginning and end of the section 32:9-20. Outside Isaiah it is parallel to בטח in Amos 6:1. In Jer 30:10 (=46:27) and 48:11, it is parallel to שקט, a semantic group also found in Isa 32:17-18.

Wildberger [1266] stresses that it is wrong to interpret Isa 32:9 in the light of 3:16f or Amos 6:1f because 32:9 is not a woe denouncing an attitude of complacency: the problem of the nation (represented by the

women) is that they have absolutely no presentiment or foreboding about what is to happen.

נָשֵׁן: (see 30:12; 31:1).

בִּטָּח: (see 30:12,15) The illusion of trust and reliance in 32:9 is replaced by a different picture of trust in 32:17-18. The context of 32:9, has more in common with 30:12f and 31:1f than with Amos 6:1f. In the latter text, the implication that the people's trust has been misplaced is lacking.

קִמְנָה: This is the plural feminine form: it does not occur elsewhere. The verb קִיֵּם occurs in a similar summons to listen in Num 23:18 but in 32:9, Duhm [212], Kaiser [1974: 325] and Wildberger [1262] omit the word as a scribal addition.

אֶן: (see 28:23).

אִמְרָה: (see 28:23).

קִוֵּל: (see 28:23).

V9 contains the summons to listen, the *Lehreröffnungsformel*. Wildberger [1267] distinguishes between the form in 32:9 which is a summons to lament and 28:23 which is a summons to listen to instruction. However, within Isaiah, the closest parallel to v9 is 28:23 although it also resembles 1:2,10. The structure of 32:9 differs from that found in Hos 5:1; Joel 1:2, the only other two instances where the hiphil imperative of אֶן is found in the summons to listen. It resembles

the use of the formula in the Psalms.

Although אמרה is often used of the word of Yahweh, this is not always the case, e.g. Gen 4:23; Deut 32:2; Isa 29:4. Therefore, in Isa 28:23, 32:9, it is better to simply see the word אמרה as a parallel to the word קול and to attach no particular significance to it in these two texts.

### Verse 10

על-שנה ימים: (see 29:1). In 32:10, the expression seems similar to 29:1 and so it is unlikely to mean "in little more than a year" as translated by the RSV.

רגז: (see 28:21).

בלה: (see 28:22).

בציר: The noun occurs 5 times in the OT: Lev 26:5; Isa 24:13; 32:10; Jer 48:32; Mic 7:1. In the last four texts, the failure of the harvest is a punishment from Yahweh. The phrase בלה בציר occurs only in 24:13 and 32:10. Wildberger [1267-8] states that in 24:13 the phrase is used simply as an indication of time and should not be connected with 32:10.

בלי: The word occurs in 5:13,14, 14:6, 28:8, 32:10. Commentators read the final ' as dittography. Wildberger [1262-3] argues that it is unusual as a negation of a finite verb. The word בל occurs in Isa 14:21; 26:10,11,14,18; 33:20,21,23,24. The texts in which בלי or בל occur appear to be late.

### Verse 11

חרר: the verb occurs in Isa 10:29; 17:2; 19:16; 21:4; 32:11. It is normally used to express the reaction to bad news, e.g. Job 37:1; Isa 10:29; 19:16; Amos 3:6.



פשטה is found only here in Isaiah but it occurs elsewhere in prophetic literature in Ez 26:16; 44:19; 16:23; 23:26; Hos 7:1; 2:5; Mic 2:8; 3:3 Nah 3:16.

ערה: In the niphal, the verb occurs only in Isa 32:10 but it is found in the piel in 3:17; 20:4; 22:6. In 3:17 it occurs in the context of the woe oracle against the daughters of Zion.

חגר: In Isaiah, the verb occurs in 3:24; 15:3; 22:12; 32:11. Wildberger [1268] points out that it often has "sackcloth" as its object (Jer 4:8; 6:26; 49:3; Joel 1:8).

פשטה, ערה, חגורה are Aramaic imperatives, second feminine plural. For this reason Wildberger [1268] emends חגורה in v11/ to חגרה. He rejects the 1QIsa reading חגרנה and ערו and sees no reason to depart from the MT. He emends ספרים to ספרה, making it an Aramaic imperative also. Procksch [412-3] remarks that the imperative forms in ה- in this verse are genuine forms, not Aramaisms, and Irwin [129] points to similar forms in Ugaritic.

חלצים: In Isaiah the word occurs in 5:27; 11:5; 32:11. Elsewhere it is found in Gen 35:11; Job 31:20; 38:3; 40:7; 1 Kgs 8:19 (=2 Chron 6:9); Jer 30:6.

### Verse 12

שרים: The form occurs in Isaiah only in 28:9 and 32:12 but Wildberger [1263] emends the word to שרים, meaning "fields". The plural ending

שרות is more common. שרים only occurs here in Isaiah. The singular occurs in 5:8 and 7:3.

ספר: The verb, found only here in Isaiah, is elsewhere used as a term for a lament, Jer 4:8; 6:26; 49:3; Joel 1:8.

חמר: The noun is found 5 times in the OT: Isa 32:12; Ez 23:6,12,23; Amos 5:11. 1QIsa reads the more frequent form חמרה.

גפן: The noun occurs 6 times in First Isaiah: 7:23; 16:8,9; 24:7; 32:12; 34:4. In all of these texts, the failure of the vine is part of the imagery of destruction. This is noticeably different from the use of the word elsewhere in prophetic literature and the Psalms where it is often used as a metaphor for Israel: Ps 80:9,15; Jer 2:21; 6:9; 8:13; Ez 15:2,6; 17:7; Hos 10:1; 14:8; Joel 1:7. However, גפן is not used in the parable of the vineyard in ch 5.

פריה: The participle occurs 6 times in the OT: Gen 49:22; Deut 29:17; Ps 128:3; Isa 17:6, 32:12; Ez 19:10. The closest parallel linguistically to Isa 32:12 is Ps 128:3 where a wife is described as a fruitful vine.

### Verse 13

עם: (see העם הזה in 28:11,14). עמי occurs in 1:3; 3:12,15; 5:13; 10:2,24, 19:25; 22:4; 26:20; 32:13,18. In 3:15, 10:2, Yahweh is concerned about his people who are being treated unjustly. In 1:3, 3:12, 5:13, he is concerned because they are being confused and misled. According to Fey [62] and Hoffmann [18], all the Isaian texts containing עמי except 22:4 are spoken by Isaiah. Stansell [1988: 119] notes that at times עמי seems to be equivalent to the עניים and the רלים (3:15; 10:2). In 32:13, עמי is a little

incongruous if originally v9-14 constituted an oracle of judgment. The first person singular possessive pronoun raises a question as to who is speaking here; whether קולי and אמרתי in v9 and עמי in v13 refer to the prophet or to Yahweh.

ארמה: (see 28:24).

קוץ: The noun occurs in Isa 32:13 and 33:12 and 8 times elsewhere in the OT (Gen 3:18; Ex 22:5; Judg 8:7,16; 2 Sam 23:6; Ps 118:12; Jer 4:3, 12:13; Ez 28:24; Hos 10:8). It is sometimes used figuratively; in Isa 33:12 and Ez 28:24, it is associated with the peoples (עמים). In 2 Sam 23:6, it is associated with the noun בליעל. Only in Isa 32:13 is קוץ parallel to שמיר. In Jer 4:3; 12:13, it is associated with sowing.

שמיר: The noun occurs 8 times in First Isaiah (5:6; 7:23,24,25; 9:17; 10:17; 27:4; 32:13). Elsewhere in the OT, it occurs only 3 times (Jer 17:1; Ez 3:9; Zech 7:12) where it means something hard, like flint.

In all other instances in Isaiah, שמיר occurs parallel to שית. The contexts in which the word is found are of interest: firstly it appears in the poem of the vineyard in 5:6. Isa 7:23-25 interprets ch 7 in the light of the same parable. Isa 27:4 similarly re-interprets its previous section in the light of the parable of the vineyard. It is more difficult to ascertain the significance of the remaining two contexts:

- (a) 9:17: Clements [1980a: 69] suggests that here, the phrase שמיר ושית is part of the image of the forest fire and is authentic to Isaiah. He states that the image first appears in 5:6 but does not find any clear connections between the two texts.
- (b) 10:17: Clements [1980a:114] suggests that the phrase here "has been

taken from 5:6 but here it refers to the Assyrian soldiers indicating a dependence upon the secondary passage 7:24. This would suggest that 7:23-25 may also belong to the AR."

Nielsen [104-106] in a survey of the phrase notes that it always occurs in a context which concerns the wicked. She refers to the fable of Jotham (Judg 9:8-15) and to 2 Kgs 14:9 where the bramble and thistle symbolize what is of no value while the cedars of Lebanon are an image of what is valuable.

It is interesting that the phrase only occurs in Isaiah in all of the OT. The closest parallel to 32:13 seems to be 7:23-25. In particular 7:25b has similarities with 32:20b:

7:25b	והיה למשלח שור ולמרמס שה
32:20b	אשריכם . . משלחי רגל-השור והחמור

The phrase *קוץ שמיר* in 32:13 does not occur but *קוץ שמיר* does. It refers to the fruitful vine. 1QIsa adds ו between the two words. Kaiser [1974: 325] strikes out the word *שמיר* and Duhm [213] strikes out the word *קוץ* but Wildberger [1263] defends the MT: he sees the phrase as a type of genitive as in Prov 24:31.

*משוש*: The noun occurs in Isa 24:8,11 and 32:13. In Second Isaiah, it is found in 60:1; 62:5; 65:18; 66:10. Elsewhere it occurs in Job 8:19; Ps 48:3; Jer 49:25; Ez 24:25; Hos 2:13. It is used of Jerusalem or Zion in Second Isaiah (60:1; 62:5; 65:18; 66:10) and in Ps 48:3 and of Damascus in Jer 49:25. However, *משוש* in Isa 32:13 denotes a negative quality as it does in 24:8,11. Its use is in contrast to the description of Jerusalem in Second Isaiah if the original oracle constituted v9-14 and heralded destruction.

קריה: (see 29:1).

עליזה: The noun occurs in Isaiah in 13:3; 22:2; 23:7; 24:8; 32:13; and in Zeph 2:15; 3:11 (1). In First Isaiah, עליזה in all cases has a negative meaning, often implying pride and arrogance. However, it is not generally associated with Jerusalem. In 23:7, it is used of Tyre; in 23:12 of Sidon; in 24:8 of the earth; in 13:3 of Babylon; in Zeph 2:15 of Nineveh; in Zeph 3:11, it is used of the wicked who oppose the righteous.

Elsewhere it is associated with the wicked (2 Sam 1:20; Ps 94:3; Jer 11:15; 15:17; 50:11; 51:39). Only in Psalms and Proverbs (23:16) does it have a positive significance, namely to exult in Yahweh. None of the texts where the word occurs can be attributed with any certainty to Isaiah. The only exact parallel to the phrase קריה עליזה in 32:13 occurs in 22:2. In 24:8, as in 32:13, משובש is parallel to עליז (2).

#### Verse 14

ארמון: The noun occurs 4 times in First Isaiah (23:13; 25:2; 32:14; 34:13). In each text, it is a question of the destruction of palace(s). All contexts are similar; in 23:13, it is the palaces of Tyre that are destroyed; in 25:2 it is the palaces of foreigners; in 34:13, it concerns the nations. In none of these texts can ארמון be attributed to Isaiah with any certainty.

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1. The verb עלז occurs in 2 Sam 1:20; Prov 23:16; Ps 28:7; 60:8; 68:5; 94:3; 96:12; 108:8; 149:5; Isa 5:14; 23:12; Jer 11:15; 15:17; 50:11; 51:39; Zeph 3:14; Hab 3:18.
  2. Note some other similarities between 24:4-13 and 32:9-14: e.g. the theme of the vine in v7; in 10a קרית is parallel to בית; the theme of the harvest in v14 which concludes with the phrase בלה בציר; the latter phrase occurs in Isaiah only in these two texts.

עזב: The verb occurs 11 times in First Isaiah (1). The closest parallels with 32:14 are 17:2,9; 18:6; 27:10. In 17:2, the cities of Aroer are deserted and given over to the flocks (עֲרִיִם) and in 17:9, the strong cities will be deserted. In 18:6, Yahweh cuts off the harvest from the inhabitants of the earth who will be left to the birds of prey and the beasts of the earth. In 27:10, the fortified city is deserted and the calf grazes there. The verb is used in 1:4,28 where the people are accused of forsaking the Lord. It is not found parallel to נָטַשׁ in Isaiah except in 32:13 but the latter verb is found in 2:6; 16:8; 21:15; 32:14; 33:23.

המון: (see 29:5,7,8).

עיר: The noun occurs 14 times in First Isaiah (2). It is often qualified:

1:8	כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה
1:26	עִיר הַצָּרָה
22:9	עִיר רוּר
26:1	עִיר עֵז
27:10	עִיר בְּצוּרָה

The phrase עִיר הַמּוֹן does not occur. It can usually be determined what city is being referred to: in 1:8,26; 22:9; 26:1, it is Zion; in 14:31 it is Philistia; in 17:1 it is Damascus; in 19:2,18, Egypt; in 23:16, Tyre. In other cases, it refers to the dwellings of the wicked as opposed to the just (24:12; 25:2). In 27:10, 32:14,19, עִיר is not explicitly identified.

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1. Isa 1:4,28; 6:12; 7:16; 10:3,14; 17:2,9; 18:6; 27:10; 32:14.
  2. Isa 1:8,26; 14:31; 17:1; 19:2,18; 22:8; 23:16; 24:12; 25:2; 26:1; 27:10; 32:14,19.

עֵפֶל: In Isaiah the noun occurs only in 32:14. In 2 Kgs 5:24 it means "hill". In 2 Chron 27:13; 33:14; Neh 3:26; 11:21; Mic 4:8; it is explicitly associated with Jerusalem. As Wildberger points out [1270], it is difficult to make any association between Isa 32:14 and Mic 4:8. If the word in Isaiah is meant to signify Jerusalem, it must be post-exilic. Even with the meaning "hill", given the other places where the word appears, it would be difficult to attribute it to Isaiah.

בֶּחֶן occurs in the singular only here and in the plural in 23:13. Wildberger [1264] explains it as an Egyptian loanword. Marti [235] regards עֵפֶל and בֶּחֶן (absent in the LXX) as later additions.

מַעְרוֹת is found in 32:14 and in 2:19; the latter text refers to the coverts of rocks where men will hide from before the terror of Yahweh. To commentators this word has presented a problem: how can a height and watchtower become a den? Duhm [213] vocalized it as מַעְרָה to give "nakedness". Driver [1968b: 52] associated it with the Arabic word *ma'iru*, meaning "bare soil". Wildberger [1264] retains the MT vocalization and thinks that the word has the general meaning of "shelter".

פְּרָאִים occurs in Isaiah only in 32:14. Elsewhere it occurs in Gen 16:12; Job 6:5; 11:12; 24:5; 39:5; Ps 104:11; Jer 2:24; 14:6; Hos 8:9.

מַרְעָה occurs in Isaiah only in 32:14. Elsewhere it occurs in Gen 47:4; 1 Chron 4:39,40,41; Job 39:8; Neh 2:12; Lam 1:6; Ez 34:14,18; Joel 1:18.

עֶרְרִים: The noun is found only in 17:2 and 32:14 in Isaiah. Both share the same context of flocks grazing after the fall of a city.

However, 17:2 is more positive in that the flocks lie down and there is no one to make them afraid. Driver [1968b: 52] changes עררים to עררים to make a better parallel to פראים but Wildberger [1264] thinks this is not necessary. He remarks that there is no definite way of knowing whether עררים should be connected with ערר in Mic 4:8.

**Summary:** Isa 32:9-14 contain many unusual words and many words that may reflect the late post-exilic composition of the passage:

קולי\אמרתי	the parallel in Isaiah occurs only in 28:23 and 29:4.
שאננות	only found in the context of chs 32-33 in 32:9,11,18 and 33:20.
ימים על-שנה	the phrase occurs nowhere else in the OT.
כלה בציר	the phrase occurs only here and in 24:13.
אסף	only found in 32:10 and 33:14.
בל\בלי	only found in late texts, 14:21; 26:10,11,14,18; 33:20,21,23,24.
פשטה	only found in 32:11.
ערה	in the niphal, only found in 32:11.
שרים	only in 32:11 and 28:9. (or שרים: only in plural here and in singular in 5:8; 7:3.)
פשטה	Aramaic imperative.
ערה	Aramaic imperative.
חגורה	Aramaic imperative.
ספר	only in 32:12.
חמר	only in 32:12.
פריה	only in 32:12 and 17:6.
גפן פריה	only parallel is in Ps 128:3.
קוץ	only in 32:13 and 33:13.



קוץ\שמיר	A strange combination since in Isaiah שמיר is always found with שית.
משוש	always found in late passages (24:8,11) or in Second Isaiah (60:15; 62:5; 65:18; 66:10).
עליזה	only found in 5:14; 23:12; 32:13.
עפל	closest text is Mic 4:8.
בחן	only in 32:14 and 23:13.
מערות	only in 32:14 and in 2:19.
פראים	only in 32:14.
מרעה	only in 32:14.
עדרים	only in 32:14 and 17:2.

## CONTEXT

The term בנות in 32:9, especially if it represents the nation, as Wildberger [1267] suggests, may be connected with the סוררים בנים and the בנים כחשים in 30:1,9.

Some similarities may be noted between the sons of ch 30 and the daughters of ch 32.<sup>4</sup> In both cases, the author envisages a permanent time dimension: in 30:8b, the worthlessness of Egypt's help is for the rebellious sons a witness for the day to come ליום אחרון and forever ער עולם. In 32:2, the city is to be destroyed forever, בער and ער-עולם. In 30:9 the sons refuse to hear the teaching of Yahweh while in 32:9, the daughters are summoned to "give ear" and listen. In 30:12b, the sons trust (בטח) and rely (נשען) on evil. In 32:9,10,11, the only accusation made is that the daughters are complacent (בטח) and at ease (שאנן). The punishment of the rebellious sons is described in terms of the collapse of a city or town which is not named (30:13-14) and the punishment of the daughters is described in terms of the collapse of a city whose name is implied but not explicitly mentioned (32:13-14).

The verbs **בטח** and **שׂאן** only occur in parallel in 32:9,11,18. There is close repetition of these words in v9,10,11 and a double summons in v9 and 11, one to hear and one to lament. In the context, the summons in v11 is more appropriate than that of v9. Commentators interpret the words **שׂאנוּת**, **בטחות** as merely indicating that the daughters are "carefree and happy" [Clements 1980a: 262], that they have no "hunch" [Wildberger 1267] as to the forthcoming catastrophe. However, Kaiser [1974: 328-9] points out that if no deeper significance is attached to these words, then there is no real reproach or accusation levelled against the daughters. In the context of chs 28-33, the significance of the verbs **שׂאן**, **בטח** must be looked at in the light of the way they are used in chs 30-31.

A further connection with 31:1 may also be intentional. There, those who go down to Egypt rely on horses and trust in chariots: this is the reproach. In 31:1b, their destruction is assured. In 30:15 and 32:17,18; 33:20, a different positive image is built around the verbs **בטח** and **שׂאן**. In 30:15 (which responds directly to 30:12) the speech of Yahweh is rejected. In 32:17 the rejected speech of Yahweh (introduced in 30:15) is picked up again. There is a long term effect: **עוֹלָם-עַד** is emphasized both in 30:8 and 32:14. The "trust" of the rebellious sons in 30:9f, the "trust" of those who go down to Egypt in 31:1f, the "trust" of the complacent daughters in 32:9f is condemned: trust in Yahweh has been proposed in 30:15 but this has been rejected: but in 32:17, trust is the effect of righteousness and now it lasts forever. As a result of righteousness the people will dwell

במשכנות מבטחים ובמנוחת שׂאנוּת

- a contrast to the desolation of 32:14 (1). The author(s), may have been influenced in his choice of vocabulary by key words from previous chapters.

It is important to understand the words *שאננות*, *בטחות* in their wider context for further reasons. Apart from isolated incidents (Isa 12:2; 14:30; 26:3,4), the main concentrations of the use of the verb *בטח* are found in two places in First Isaiah: 5 times in chs 30-32 (30:12,15; 31:1; 32:9,10,11,17,18) and 6 times in ch 36 (36:4,5,6,7,9,15). Both contexts deal with the same issue: the choice of trusting in Egypt or trusting in Yahweh. In ch 36, the object of the verb *בטח* is always very specific - either Egypt or Yahweh.

In the context of Isa 32, *שאנן* is probably not as significant as *בטח*. V11 is a *reprise* of v9 while v18 picks up the same theme. In 33:20, Jerusalem is identified as the *נוה שאנן*. Always in Jeremiah, (30:10; 46:27; 48:11), *שקט* is parallel to *שאנן*. This might indicate that *שאנן* is more appropriate to the context of v18 than it is to v9.

Three of the four uses of the word *אמרה* in Isaiah are found in chs 28-32 (28:23; 29:4; 32:9). Apart from 5:24, the word is not found elsewhere in prophetic literature. In 28:23, 29:4, 32:9, it is parallel to *קול*. In spite of the argument of Jensen [1973: 43] that it is a wisdom word (2), or a legal word (3), in Isa 32:9 no particular significance should be attached to it, occurring as it does in a stereotyped formula. Its importance lies in the fact that it links together the introductory

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1. *נחת* from the same root as *מנוחת* is also found in 30:15.
  2. It is parallel to *תורה* in 5:24 and to *לקח* in Deut 32:1.
  3. It is parallel to *ברית* in Deut 33:9 and is found most often in Ps 119.

formulae of 28:23 and 32:9 quite closely (1).

Within the context of chs 28-32, it is difficult to see how the three uses of the word pair קול, אמרה can be attributed to the same author. Isa 28:23 and 32:9 are similar but 29:4 is quite different. Commentators (Jensen [1973: 98], Kaiser [1974: 327], Wildberger [1264]) make a distinction between the use of the summons to listen in 28:23 and 32:9. One introduces a wisdom speech, the other is a call to lament. However, in 32:9f, there are really two summonses - one to listen (v9) and one to lament (v11). Therefore the link between 28:23 and 32:9 cannot be underestimated - given the important role that "hearing" and "refusing to hear" plays in these chapters.

The phrase ימים על שנה in 32:10 is to be linked to 29:1. With Wildberger [1268], it is best to interpret it as a phrase meaning a very short time. Both phrases in 29:1 and 32:10 give the impression of a cycle: in 28:23-29, there are two expressions of time, one in v24 (הבל) and the other in v28 (כי לא לנצח) which also suggest the seasonal cycle. In 29:5, the visitation of Yahweh comes suddenly (לפתע פתאום) and in 30:13 the punishment of the rebellious sons also comes suddenly (פתאום לפתע). In 29:17, a reversal takes place very soon (הלא עוד מעט מזער).

The verb רגז occurs in chs 28-33 in 28:21 and 32:10. As in the rest of the OT, the verb in both cases denotes an action or reaction that has to do with the might or anger of Yahweh.

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1. The use of the word pair קול, אמרה in 29:4 is evidence not to attach too much significance to these words.

The phrase כלה בציר is not found in the context of chs 28-33 but the theme of the harvest is. Within 32:9-20, the failure of the harvest is entwined with the collapse of the city: vv 10; 12-13a; 15b; 16; 20 deal with the harvest. Elsewhere in chs 28-33, there are images of harvest and nature: 28:4b; 28:23-28; 29:17; 30:23-24; 33:11-12. Isa 28:24-25; 30:23a and 32:20 concern sowing. Isa 29:17 and 32:15b concern the wilderness becoming fruitful again. The idea of the harvest failing in 32:10f is not found elsewhere in chs 28-33 and the language used e.g. כלה בציר, is not that found in the other passages dealing with the harvest. However, 32:15f does pick up some of the vocabulary, e.g. 32:15b echoes 29:17.

The word ארמה generally means "land" in Isaiah but in chs 28-31 it denotes the soil (28:24; 30:23,24; 32:13). Isa 28:24 concerns the sowing of seed in the soil; 30:23-24 concerns the grain producing soil; 32:13 concerns the soil growing up in thorns and briers.

The word עמי used in such a negative context in v13 seems incongruous. Elsewhere in chs 28-33, עמי with the first person suffix is not found except in 32:18. In 28:11,14; 29:13,14, the people are called pejoratively "this people" and in 30:9 they are called a "rebellious" people. In 30:19, they are addressed as the "people in Zion who dwell in Jerusalem".

The word קוץ appears only twice in Isaiah, both times in the present context, in 32:13 and 33:12. In 33:12 the word is used to refer to the "peoples".

In chs 28-33, the word קריה appears only 3 times in chs 28-33 (29:1; 32:13; 33:20). Only in 33:20 is the city explicitly identified as Jerusalem

but it is implied in 29:1 "the city where David encamped". Isa 29:1f has some similarities with 32:9-14:

<u>29:1-4</u>	<u>32:9-14</u>
קריה	קריה
שנה על שנה	ימים על שנה
קול/אמרה	קול/אמרה
המון	המון

Thematically, both texts deal with the destruction of the city but the picture of the city in 33:20 contrasts with the other two texts.

Six of the ten occurrences of the word המון are found in chs 28-33 (29:5,7,8; 31:4; 32:14; 33:3). In 29:5,7,8, as in the OT generally, the word is often associated with the wicked, the enemy. Just as the epithet עליזה in 32:13b is generally not used of Jerusalem, so too the word המון is generally not used of Jerusalem. The theme of Zion, Jerusalem, features often in chs 28-33. An image of security and safety is presented (28:16; 29:5-8; 30:19; 30:29; 31:4-5; 31:9; 33:5; 33:20). Only in 29:1-4 and 32:9-14 is the city threatened by Yahweh.

### Isaiah 32: 15-20

## INTRODUCTION

Most commentators (Duhm [215], Marti [236], Fohrer [1967a: 132], Kaiser [1974: 332], Vermeylen [1977: 427], Wildberger [1275]) begin by removing v19 and the *Gratulationswort* in v20 as two separate additions. They understand v19 as a later interpolation or a marginal note that has been inserted awkwardly between v18 and v20. The chief difficulty with v19 is that it speaks of judgment on forest and city while its immediate context has to do with salvation.

Wildberger [1276] argues that v20 was added after v19 but Stansell [1983: 11] suggests that v19 was inserted after v15-18 were already in position. The function of v20 is to offer an appropriate blessing upon the peace and security of the new age (v17-18) while picking up at the same time the agricultural imagery of v10b,12,13,15b,16b.

Although Duhm [214] attempted to defend the Isaian authenticity of v15-18, this view today finds few defenders. Barth [211-13] followed by Clements [1980a: 259] attribute v1-8 and v15-20 to the AR editors. Barth argues that v19 is not a later addition but an allusion to the destruction of Assyria and has an integrating function within the unit; v15a speaks not of an outpouring of the spirit on the people but rather of a revealing of the spirit to King Josiah. Barth relates the passage to another AR text, 8:23-9:6. However, against Barth, it is generally agreed that v19 must be removed as secondary and consequently the allusion to Assyria disappears while the alleged reference to King Josiah in v15 is found only by a manipulation of the text, in particular of the verb יַעֲרֶה. Furthermore, Stansell [1983: 9-10] points out the many differences between v1-5 and v15-20 which show that they are unlikely to come from the same author.

Various connections have been made between 32:15-20 and Second Isaiah (v15a with 44:3; v16 with 61:11; v17 with 54:13 and 60:17). Wildberger [1277] suggests a time around 500 as a possible date for the origin of v15-20. Fohrer [131-2] ascribes it to "an unknown later author" and Kaiser [1974: 332] speaks of a scribe working in the late post-exilic era. Vermeylen [1977: 427] places it among those texts which reflect the bitter opposition that existed between the just and the sinner.

## VOCABULARY

Verse 15

יִעֲרָה: The verb, the niphal of עֹר [KB 734], occurs only in Isa 32:15. In the piel it is found in Gen 24:20; Ps 137:7; 141:8; Isa 3:17; 22:6; Zeph 2:14; Hab 3:13. In the hiphil it is found in Lev 20:18,19; Isa 53:12 and in the hithpael in Ps 37:35. Duhm [214] suggests that the line is too short and adds יהוה as subject. Only here is the verb used to indicate an outpouring of the spirit: as Wildberger [1277] points out, the normal verb is שָׁפַךְ or יָצַק. However, KB [734] states that the piel form (עֲרָה) means to "pour out" in Gen 24:20 and Ps 141:8. Barth [212] translates the phrase "the spirit will be revealed" (עֹר in the sense of גִּלָּה). He interprets the verse in the light of 11:2 and suggests that it is to the king (Josiah) that the spirit will be revealed.

עָלֵינוּ: In the context of chs 28-33, the first person plural suffix is confined to two further texts: 33:2 and 33:21-22. Commentators have pointed out that the plural indicates that v15-20 come from a different author who speaks on behalf of his community. Wildberger [1277] states that the author is a representative of Israel who is united with his people.

רוּחַ: (see 28:6) In connection with this verse, Sklba [14] points out the important role of the רוּחַ in bringing about מִשְׁפָּט in exilic and post-exilic times.

מְרוֹם occurs 10 times in First Isaiah: 22:16; 24:4,18,21; 26:5; 32:15; 33:5; 37:23,24; 38:14. In Second Isaiah it appears in 40:26; 57:15; 58:4. As Wildberger [1278] suggests, מְרוֹם here refers to Yahweh - a usage that is quite rare in Isaiah (33:5; 37:23; 38:14). The closest text to 32:15 is



33:5-6. The phrase **רוח מרום** does not occur elsewhere in Isaiah or in the OT. Elsewhere in prophetic literature, **מרום** is found rarely (1). Only in Mic 6:6, is **מרום** associated with Yahweh. Yet in Second Isaiah, in all three places where it occurs, (40:26; 57:15; 58:4) it is associated with him. In the OT, the greatest concentration of the word is found in the Psalms where nearly always it refers to him (2). The use of the first person plural **עלינו** is more typical of the Psalms also than it is of Isaiah. Wildberger sees **רוח מרום** as a synonym for **רוח יהוה** (3). The name of Yahweh seems to be avoided in v15, just as it is in the whole of the chapter. Elsewhere Yahweh is associated with **מרום** in Isa 33:5; 37:23; 38:14; Mic 6:6. In Isaiah, Yahweh is normally explicitly associated with **רוח**, e.g. 4:4; 11:2; 19:3; 28:6; 29:10; 30:1; 31:3. The verb **עור** is here in the niph'al whereas elsewhere Yahweh is normally the subject of the pouring out of the spirit, e.g. 19:14; 29:10.

**מדבר**: The noun occurs 9 times in First Isaiah (4) and 10 times in Second Isaiah where the theme of the desert becoming fruitful or irrigated is common (41:18,19; 43:19,20; 50:2; 51:3; 64:9). The word occurs in a similar context in First Isaiah only in 32:15 and 35:1,6. Wildberger [1278] notes that flowers blooming in the desert is a motif of eschatological hope (41:19). He also notes that there are some connections with Second Isaiah but draws no conclusion from this about the provenance of the verse, stating that such a motif as that found in 32:15 is very natural in the environment of Middle East.

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1. Jer 17:12; 25:20; 31:12; 49:16; Ez 17:23; 20:40; 30:14; Mic 6:6; Hab 2:9.
  2. Ps 7:8; 10:5; 18:17; 56:3; 68:19; 71:19; 73:8; 75:6; 92:9; 93:4; 102:20; 144:7.
  3. He compares [1278] βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ and βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν in the Synoptics.
  4. Isa 14:17; 16:1,8; 21:1; 27:10; 32:15,16; 35:1,6.

כרמל: (see 29:17). Wildberger [1278] draws attention to the choice in 32:16 between the Qere (והכרמל) and the Kethibh (וכרמל). He points out that the article is always used with the proper name of the mountain and that the Massoretes, in pointing this text, had this mountain in mind: he suggests that the natural meaning in the context, like 29:17, is "fruitful field".

יֵעָר: (see 29:17). In 32:19 the city is parallel to the forest. In this context, it is unlikely that the city refers to Jerusalem.

### Verse 16

שָׁכַן: The verb occurs in First Isaiah in 8:18; 13:20,21; 18:3; 26:19; 32:16; 33:5,16,24; 34:11,17 and in Second Isaiah in 57:11. In three texts Yahweh is the subject and the participle is used:

<u>8:18:</u>	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַשָּׁכֵן בְּהָר צִיּוֹן
<u>33:5:</u>	יְהוָה שָׁכֵן מְרוֹם
<u>57:15:</u>	רֵם וְנִשְׂאָ שָׁכֵן עֵר

Two texts are concerned with animals or birds dwelling in the ruins of a city or country. In 13:20, Babylon will never be inhabited except by wild animals. In 34:11, in an oracle against the nations, the owl and raven shall dwell in the ruins and in 34:17, it is stated that they shall possess it forever.

In other texts (33:16,24) the verb is used in a context denoting security and stability.

The verbs שָׁכַן and יָשַׁב are used parallel in 13:20; 32:16 and 33:24. Wildberger [1278] observes that both verbs denote that justice and righteousness are not "temporary guests" but are here permanently. In 1:21, justice "lodges" in the faithful city. In 33:18 where permanency is

emphasized **ישב** and **משכנות** are again found.

**וצרקה** (see 28:27). V16 resumes the theme of v1. Wildberger [1278] states that justice and righteousness, the duty of the king in 32:1, are now broadened to become the characteristic of the city of Yahweh.

### Verse 17

For some commentators the repetition of **צרקה** presents a problem: after v16, the word pair **משפט/צרקה** is expected. Duhm [215] omits the second **צרקה**, replaces **השקט** with **משפט** and strikes out the **ו** before **בטח**, treating it as a unnecessary addition. Wildberger [1278] points out that this is not so but that **ער-עולם** picks up the same phrase in v14. He basically agrees with Duhm: he feels that **בטח** is a necessary counterpart to **בטח** in v9f and that the second **צרקה** is a copyist's error or that **השקט** should really be **משפט**. He suggests that **השקט** was added here in the light of the phrase in 30:15.

Perhaps these suggested emendations are too sweeping in a verse that presents no textual difficulties and whose vocabulary is all within the same semantic range. There is a very close connection between v17 and 30:15 (e.g. the only two instances where the noun **השקט** is found) but this does not prove that v17 borrows from 30:15. Elsewhere **שקט** is associated with **בטח**, e.g. Judg 18:7; Ez 38:11. From a literary point of view, v15-20 display a build-up of similar words, one picking up from the other, e.g. **צרקה**, **משפט**, **שכן**, **כרמל**, **מדבר**. The cumulative effect of this is deliberate and it suggests an era of ideal peace and security. The word pair **השקט ובטח** corresponds to the phrase **במשכנות מבטחים ובמנוחת שאננות** in v18b.

Arguing that v18b is too long, Duhm [215] omits **שאננות** and

Procksch [415] omits מבטחים ובמשכנות but Wildberger [1274] retains the MT.

מעשה: (see 28:21).

עבודה: (see 28:21). The closest text to 32:17 is 28:21 where the words מעשה\עבודה are parallel. There, it is Yahweh who does the work and deed. In 32:17, one could almost substitute the words justice and righteousness with Yahweh since מעשה often refers to his work. It is only in 28:21 and 32:17 where the two nouns are parallel - this is particularly interesting considering the rare occurrence of the word עבודה in prophetic literature.

שלום: The noun occurs in First Isaiah in 9:5,6; 26:3,12; 27:5; 32:17,18; 33:7; 38:17; 39:8 and in Second Isaiah in 41:3; 45:7; 48:22; 52:7; 54:10,13; 59:8; 60:17; 66:12. It is found very frequently elsewhere in prophetic literature.

It is difficult to relate the noun in 32:17,18 to any of the other uses of the word in First Isaiah. Firstly there are some textual difficulties: in 9:6, the word is either לשלום or למשל. In 26:3, one of the two occurrences of the word in the MT is absent from the LXX and Syr. In 26:12, the word is either שלום or שלום. The meaning in 27:5 is far from clear and the context does not resemble 32:17-18. The מלאכי-שלום in 33:7, like the שר-שלום in 9:5, relate to individuals rather than to a general concept as is the case in 32:17-18. In 39:8, the phrase "there will be peace and security in my days" is slightly different from 2 Kgs 20:19, where it may be an addition as it is absent in the LXX.

The word שלום in 9:5 occurs in a different context from the word in 32:17-18: there, justice and righteousness are established by peace while

in 32:17, the opposite is true - peace is the work of righteousness. Only צרקה is mentioned in 32:17 while משפט/צרקה are both mentioned in 9:7. In 9:7, peace, justice, righteousness, are all associated with the person of the ruler but in 32:17, the concepts are dealt with more abstractly.

A study of שלום in Second Isaiah throws more light on 32:17. In 45:7, it is Yahweh who creates שלום. In 48:22, there is no peace for the wicked. In 52:7, the phrase משמיע ישועה is parallel to משמיע שלום. In 54:10, ברית שלומי is parallel to חסרי. Peace and righteousness are promised to future generations in 54:13. The wicked, on the other hand, do not know the way of peace in 59:8 nor do those who walk in their paths. In 60:17, Yahweh promises that he will make the overseers שלום and the taskmasters צרקה. Similarly, in 66:12, Yahweh will extend peace to Jerusalem like a river.

שקט (see 30:15). In 32:17, the phrase השקט ובטח in the context, and particularly in relation to the parallel שלום refers to peace and the absence of war as in Judg 18:7. Like 30:15, 32:17 appears to be a conditional statement. Rest and trust only come about through righteousness. As Wildberger [1279] notes, these qualities are not bestowed purely as a gift: there can be no peace where righteousness fails. He concludes that in 32:17, rest and peace are partly a result of the spirit and partly achieved through human effort (מעשה, עבודה). Right conduct is in itself a blessing.

Wildberger's remarks are supported by the fact that in Judges, Joshua and Chronicles rest is sometimes God-given and sometimes conditional upon obeying God (see 32:15). And so in 32:17, that rest and trust should be conditional upon righteousness follows the pattern of the verb שקט in Judges, Joshua and Chronicles.

עולם or ער-עולם (see 30:8). The phrase occurs in First Isaiah in 9:6; 14:20; 24:5; 25:4; 30:8; 32:14,17; 33:14; 34:10,17; 35:10. In Second Isaiah it is found 31 times. It is often found in a context which describes the worsening rift between the good and evil: while the good will be rewarded eternally (35:10), the wicked will be punished eternally (14:20; 25:2; 33:14; 34:10,17). That the city should be destroyed forever in 32:14 is quite unusual in Isaiah.

### Verse 18

נוה: The word occurs in Isaiah in 27:10; 32:18; 33:20; 34:13; 35:7; in Second Isaiah in 65:10. It occurs in Jeremiah in 10:25; 25:30; 31:23; 33:12; 49:19 (=50:44); in Ezekiel it occurs in 25:5; 34:14 (1). It is used most consistently to denote the dwelling of animals, normally sheep and is therefore generally translated as "pasture" or "fold" (2 Sam 7:8; Isa 27:10; 34:13; 35:7; 65:10; Jer 25:30; 33:12; 49:19; 50:7,19; Ez 25:5; 34:14).

Quite often those living in the pasture are the chosen people. In Isa 65:10, Sharon has become a נוה צאן for "my people who have sought me". In Jer 25:30, Yahweh will roar against his fold. In Jer 33:12 the waste places are to become a habitation for shepherds with their flocks. In Jer 49:19, the chosen people are called a נוה איתן. In Jer 50:6, the people are described as lost sheep because they have sinned against Yahweh who is called their נוה צדק. In Jer 50:19, Yahweh will restore Israel to its pasture. In Ez 25:5, Rabbah is made a pasture for camels while in 34:14, the people of God are fed on good pasture. In 2 Sam 7:8, David is called from the pasture to serve Yahweh.

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1. Elsewhere it occurs in Ex 15:13; 2 Sam 7:8 (=1 Chron 17:7); 15:25; Prov 3:33; 21:20; 24:15; Ps 79:7.

In other cases, נוה is associated with Jerusalem. In Isa 33:20 Jerusalem is described as a נוה שאנן. In Jer 33:12, the phrase נוה רעים is probably a reference to Jerusalem. In the Song of Moses in Ex 15, we can deduce from v17 that the phrase נוה קרשך in v13 refers to Jerusalem. In 2 Sam 15:25 נוה also refers to Jerusalem in a general way.

The phrase נוה שלום in Isa 32:18 does not appear elsewhere. The normal meaning "pasture", found particularly in Jeremiah, is quite in keeping here. The נוה שלום in 32:18 contrasts with the נוה משלח ונעזב of 27:10. נוה שלום in 32:18 along with the phrase נוה שאנן in 33:20 contrast with the cities of the nations which are described as נוה תנים in ch 34.

Finally, it is worth noting that the same phrase נוה צרק occurs in Jer 31:23 where it refers to Jerusalem and in 50:7 where it refers to Yahweh. The phrase in Jer 31:23, יברכך נוה צרק, resembles Prov 3:33, נוה צריקים יברך יהוה.

In Prov 24:15 the phrase נוה צרק is found and the phrase נוה חכם in 21:20.

משכנות: The noun occurs in Isa 32:18 and 54:2. Elsewhere it is found mainly in the Psalms, (43:3; 78:28; 84:2; 87:2; 132:5,7), Jeremiah (9:18; 30:18; 51:30) and in other isolated instances (Num 24:5; Cant 1:8; Hab 1:6). In many instances the dwellings refer to Jerusalem or to Israel. Jer 9:18 refers to the destruction of Zion's dwellings while 30:18 refers to their restoration.

The singular is often used in the Psalms to refer to the dwelling place of Yahweh (43:3; 84:2; 132:5,7). Ps 84:2 describes the dwelling places of Jacob.

Two further texts are of interest:

- (a) The noun is only found in the Pentateuch in Num 24:5 in the oracle of Balaam. As in the context of Isa 32:18, an idyllic picture of the dwellings of Jacob is given in terms of the fertility of the earth.

- (b) Job 39:6 describes the dwelling place of the wild ass. Although Job 39:5-8 is similar to Isa 32:15f in vocabulary, both the context and theme are different.

מנוחה: (see 28:12). The noun occurs in Isa 11:10; 28:12; 32:18; 66:1. It is found elsewhere scattered throughout the OT but forming no consistent pattern (1). The word is used twice with the meaning "pasture" (Gen 49:15; Ps 23:2). In Num 10:33, the ark of the covenant seeks a resting place while in 1 Chron 28:2, David seeks a house of rest for the ark. In 1 Kgs 8:56 Solomon thanks God that he has given a resting place to his people. In 1 Chron 22:9, Solomon is a man of rest *איש מנוחה* because Yahweh has given him rest from his enemies. In Deut 12:9, it is also a question of rest from the enemy. In Ps 95:10-11, the people will never enter God's rest because "they are a people who err in heart and do not know his ways." Sometimes the word describes the resting place of God as in Isa 66:1; in Ps 132:8,15, Zion is his resting place. Isa 66:1 also deals with the resting place of God. Isa 11:10 looks to the future when the dwelling of Jerusalem will be glorious. This is the same context as that in which the word appears in 32:18. Within chs 28-33, the promise made in 28:12 is now fulfilled.

### Verse 19

Wildberger [1274] with BHS, reads *וירר* for *וברר*. It forms a better parallel with v19b and *ברר* as a verb is found nowhere else in the OT. Kaiser [1974: 332] supported by 1QIsa retains *וברר* and so chooses the *lectio difficilior*. Driver [1968b: 52] associates the verb *ברר* with the Arabic *barudu* "it is cool" and translates the whole verse in the context

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1. Gen 49:15; Num 10:33; Deut 12:9; Judg 20:43; 2 Sam 14:17; 1 Kgs 8:56; 1 Chron 22:9; 28:2; Ruth 1:9; Ps 23:2; 95:11; 132:8,14; Jer 45:3; 51:59; Mic 2:10; Zech 9:1.



of an idyllic era of peace:

"And it will be cool when it runs down (to the plain) and the city will laze in the (hot) lowlands."

Wildberger [1276] rejects Driver's translation as an exegetical *tour de force* and deals with v19 in some detail. Basically the problem revolves around why the forest (regarded as a fruitful field in v 15b) should now suddenly crash down. The forest in v19 cannot mean Jerusalem but a nation hostile to Jerusalem. V19 offers a parallel to the Isaian Apocalypse where the identity of the nation hostile to Jerusalem remains obscure. Duhm [215], followed by Marti [236], Procksch [416], Fohrer [1967a:132] and Eichrodt [205] sees the forest as a hostile world power (as in 10:18, 33f). Traditionally, the crash of the forest in 32:19 has been seen as a picture of the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Kaiser [1974: 335] interprets the verse eschatologically: he suggests that the forest destroyed by hail is the enemy army which has overwhelmed the city of God. The city is the world capital which is the source of all hostility towards the people of God. As long as the world power triumphs, there can be no hope of the peace to which the apocalyptic author and his community look forward. Commenting on Kaiser's proposal, Wildberger [1275-6] states that if v19 had originally been part of v15-20, the verse would have made an impossible demand on the reader; on the one hand the author stresses firstly the motif of the fruitfulness of the forest but then the symbolism of the forest suddenly changes - its crash now becomes an omen for the "new time". For Wildberger, v19 is an interpolation inserted by a glossator who put the verse in this position for the eschatological reasons suggested by Kaiser. In other words, Wildberger accepts Kaiser's suggestion that v19 should be interpreted eschatologically but disagrees that it was originally part of

the section.

Barthélemy [224] makes the interesting suggestion that the author of the text used the technique of *paronomasia* where **וּבְרַר** echoes **בְּרִרְתָּ** as **וּבְשֹׁפְלָהּ** echoes **תִּשְׁפֹּל** and **הָעִיר** corresponds to **הָעִיר**. Barthélemy offers the TOB translation as most accurately reflecting the MT:

Mais la forêt s'écroulera sous la grêle  
et la ville tombera très bas.

**וּבְרַר**: (see 28:2).

**וּבְשֹׁפְלָהּ**: (see 29:4).

### Verse 20

**אֲשֶׁרִי**: (see 30:18). The occurrence of the word **אֲשֶׁרִיכֶם** in 32:20 does not fit the pattern of the word as it is used in Proverbs and Psalms. Firstly with the suffix, it is quite rare and the combination of **אֲשֶׁרִי** + suffix + participle is never found elsewhere. Secondly it lacks the moral exhortation which it normally has in Proverbs and Psalms. Thirdly it is not closely associated with Yahweh as it normally is.

The suffix "you" attached to **אֲשֶׁרִי** in v20 does not correspond to "us" in v15 or to "my" people in v18. Most commentators see v20 as an addition, as is v19. However, rather than see the two verses as two separate additions (1), it may be that both verses were added at the same time. In v19, the forest and the city are symbols of evil but v20 offers a contrast: by implication those in v20 are the righteous. The conditional part of **אֲשֶׁרִי** is connected with the theme of justice and righteousness

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1. Wildberger [1276] leaves the authorship of v19 and v20 open, stating that v20 interprets v19.

in v17. The picture of peace and security in v20 is conditional upon justice and righteousness: it is not a simple description of an era of prosperity. In only one other instance of the word in Second Isaiah in 56:2,9, the man "who keeps justice and righteousness" is happy.

In 32:20, when the spirit has been poured upon the people, they receive justice and righteousness and so are "blessed".

זרע: (see 28:24). In 32:20, the theme of sowing extends the image of the fruitful field in v15 and reverses the image of the destruction of the harvest in v10f.

שור: The noun שור occurs in Isa 1:3; 7:25; 32:20: and the noun חמור in 1:3; 21:7; 32:20. The two words appear together in Isaiah only in 1:3 and 32:20 but the phrase most similar to that of 32:20 is found in 7:25, והיה למשלח שור. In 30:24, the phrase "oxen and asses" consists of two different words, האלפים והעירים.

Summary: A look at the vocabulary of Isa 32:15-20 shows little similarity with the rest of Isaiah or indeed with the rest of the prophetic literature:

ערה	is used in the niphal only here.
רוח ממרום	only occurs here.
כרמל	4 times in 32:15-16, twice in 29:17: this accounts for most of the occurrences of the word in the OT. Outside of Isaiah, it only occurs in Mic 7:14; Jer 4:26.
עבודה	only occurs in Isa 14:3; 28:21; 32:17. Apart from Ez 29:18; 44:14, it is not found in prophetic literature.
משכנות	only occurs in 32:18 and 54:2.

ברר	If the MT is retained, the word is only used as a verb here.
שפל	is used 13 times in Isaiah out of a total of 27 times in the OT.
אשרי	this form is found only in Isa 30:18; 32:20; 56:2.
מרום	common in the Psalms.
עבודה	common in Exodus, Numbers, Chronicles.
שקט	common in Joshua, Judges, Chronicles.
אשרי	common in the Psalms and Proverbs.

### Links with Second Isaiah:

- (a) The use of רוח in 32:15 is similar to its use in 40:13; 42:1; 44:3; 57:16; 61:1-4; 63:14.
- (b) מרום associated with Yahweh is rare in prophetic literature (only in Mic 6:6). Yet, in all three texts in Second Isaiah (40:26; 57:15; 58:40) it is associated with Yahweh.
- (c) The word מרבר occurs 10 times in Second Isaiah and is found there as part of the theme of the irrigation and fruitfulness of the desert.
- (d) A look at שלום in Second Isaiah throws more light on the use of this word in 32:17 than any occurrence of the word in First Isaiah.
- (e) ער עולם or עולם occur 37 times in Second Isaiah.
- (f) אשרי in prophetic literature only occurs in Isa 30:18; 32:20 and 56:2.

### CONTEXT

The Absence of Yahweh in ch 32: A glance through chs 28,29,30,31,33 shows that the name of Yahweh, his words, his actions are very important. This is not the case in ch 32.

Yahweh is mentioned only once in ch 32 in v6b and here only very indirectly. In v1-2, the person of Yahweh is implied but not mentioned. In v9, one would expect some such phrase as כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה or a similar introduction. In the absence of this, it must be assumed, as most commentators do, that in v9 the prophet is speaking. In v9-14, the indictment does not explicitly mention Yahweh or include any sin committed against him. In v13, it is the prophet again who speaks. In v15, the phrase רוּחַ מַמְרוּם occurs where we might expect the phrase יְהוָה. Also in v15, יַעֲרָה is in the niphal whereas Yahweh is usually the subject in such a context. In v18,20, again it is the prophet who is speaking.

The chapter seems more preoccupied with human concerns than with conveying a religious message. V1 is concerned with the king and princes. In v2, the word אִישׁ stresses the human element while יְהוָה is not mentioned. V6-8 are again concerned with human preoccupations. In v9-14, there is no specific religious message. V15-20 appear to reflect on the benefits of material security, e.g. v20.

In a chapter full of human preoccupations, the most important terms which ensure its unity are מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה: they open the chapter and are picked up again in v16. The whole chapter is built around these concepts and its message is similar to that of 28:17.

מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה in ch 32: The terms צִדְקָה, מִשְׁפָּט occur together in Isa 1:21; 5:7,16; 9:7; 16:5; 32:16,17; 33:5. A consistent theme is conveyed by these two words in First Isaiah: Israel as a nation lacks justice and righteousness: yet only with these virtues can Israel be saved. In

1:21-26, the section opens with the accusation that the faithful city no longer contains justice and righteousness and it closes in v26 by looking forward to the time when again it will be called the city of righteousness. V27 continues by saying that only by justice and righteousness can Zion be saved. A similar theme is found in 5:7 at the close of the Song of the Vineyard: when Yahweh looked for justice, it was not to be found.

On the other hand, justice and righteousness are associated with Yahweh. In 5:16, he is exalted in justice. Similarly, in 33:5, he is exalted and will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. Indirectly, Yahweh acts with justice and righteousness through the descendants of David in 9:7; 16:5 and through his spirit in 11:5. Yahweh cleanses Zion by a spirit of judgment in 4:4. In 28:6, he is a spirit of judgment to those who sit in judgment. In 28:17, he makes justice the line and righteousness the plummet. These are to be the conditional elements for the security of Jerusalem. In 30:18, he is a God of justice and in 28:26, he teaches the farmer according to what is right.

In 1:17, the people are urged to seek justice; in 10:2, the "writers of iniquity" lack justice and righteousness. In First Isaiah, then, it is clear that justice and righteousness are lacking; that salvation only comes about through these virtues and that Yahweh is the one who provides them.

Verse 2: The images in v2 are normally associated with social justice. Isa 32:2 contrasts with 28:17: in the latter, the "refuge of lies" is destroyed when justice is made the line and righteousness the plummet. In 32:2, justice and righteousness are the shelter from the hail. In 24:4-5, Yahweh is a stronghold to the poor and needy against the ruthless. In 16:3, the granting of justice is described in terms of giving

shade like night at the height of noon. In Psalm 31:4, 71:5, where Yahweh is described as a rock, his righteousness is mentioned in the same context.

Verse 4: In Proverbs 17:26, a parallel is drawn between the righteous צַדִּיק and the noble נָרִיב. In Job 33:16-18 which is similar in vocabulary to Isa 32:1-8, particularly v4, the question is asked "Shall one who hates justice govern?"

Verse 6: In v6b, אֵין implies social injustice. Similarly, the evil decrees in 10:1 and "those who watch to do evil" in 29:20 result in social injustice in 10:2 and 29:21 respectively. Those who do "evil" in the Psalms (אֵין: 27 times), in Proverbs (8 times), Job (11 times) are very often opposed to the "righteous". In Second Isaiah, 59:4-8, אֵין occurs three times in the context of a lack of justice, righteousness and peace. In Prov 11:9, a contrast is drawn between the godless חֲנֹף and the righteous צַדִּיק.

In First Isaiah, famine (רָעָב) is a punishment from God. Only in 32:6 (and in 58:7,10) does it fall within the area of social justice: but in Job 22:7; Prov 25:21; and particularly Ez 18:7,16, it is the sign of the just man to alleviate hunger and thirst.

Verse 7: Yahweh enters into judgment מִשְׁפָּט on behalf of the עֲנִיִּים in 3:14-15. In 10:2, those who rob the עֲנִיִּים of justice are condemned. In 14:32, the עֲנִיִּים take refuge in Zion. The conduct of the כָּלִי in 32:7 goes against the Law of Ex 23:6-7 where the phrase רֹבֵר שֶׁקֶר and מִשְׁפָּט אֲבִיוֹן are found. In 28:15, שֶׁקֶר (the word only occurs in 28:15, 9:14, 32:7) may be the opposite of מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה.

Verse 9-14: Interestingly, there are no links in this section with other texts concerned with justice and righteousness.

Verse 15: רוּחַ is sometimes associated with justice and righteousness, e.g. 11:2f. In 4:4, 28:6, the phrase רוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט occurs and is associated with

Yahweh. In 40:13, a "path of justice" is associated with the spirit of Yahweh. In 42:1, the servant upon whom the spirit has been poured, will bring forth justice and establish it upon the earth. In 61:1-3, the spirit of the Lord is given to grant to those who mourn in Zion gladness so that they may be called "oaks of righteousness". In 33:5 Yahweh who dwells on high מרום will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. The theme of turning the deserts into springs of water is expressed in 41:17 in terms of giving water to the poor and needy.

Verse 16: That justice should dwell in the desert is strange: one would have expected it to dwell in Jerusalem as in 1:21-26.

Verse 17: Righteousness, quietness and trust contrast with the tone of 32:9f. As in 28:16-17a, so too in 32:17 it is stated that the security of Jerusalem is conditional upon justice and righteousness. This verse, therefore, interprets v9-14 in its present context.

שלום in 9:5,6 is also attached to justice and righteousness. In 54:13, peace and righteousness are promised to future generations. In 60:17, Yahweh promises that he will make the overseers "peace" and the taskmasters "righteousness".

Although it is more complex, the concept of שקט may be closely linked with justice, e.g. in 2 Chron 13-14, it is emphasized three times (13:23; 14:4,15) that there was rest in the land because Asa did "what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord".

In Jer 50:6, Yahweh is called a נזה צדק and in 31:23, the same phrase is used of Jerusalem.

אשרי often denotes the blessings that fall upon the righteous (Prov 20:7; Ps 89:16; 106:3). Those who surround Solomon in 1 Kgs 10:8, are blessed because Yahweh has set Solomon on the throne to execute justice and righteousness.



Gonçalves [217-8] when dealing with Isa 28:17 makes some comments on justice and righteousness which are relevant here. The following are his views. The two terms can characterize relations between God and man and also between man and his neighbour. In Isaiah, where the roots שפט and צדק occur often, they apply only to relations between man and his neighbour. He interprets 28:17a in the sense of social justice because this concern constitutes one of the major messages of Isaiah (1:10-17; 1:21-26; 3:14-15; 5:8-10, 11-14, 22-23; 10:1-4). The theme of justice is explicitly connected with the presence of Yahweh in Zion in 28:14-18 and in 14:32b. He accepts that the term "poor" in 14:32 may be interpreted in the later post-exilic religious sense but argues that nothing in 14:32 prevents one from seeing it in sociological terms, the normal sense in Isaiah. In 28:7-13, the presence of Yahweh in Zion is accompanied by a call to justice (v12). The link between justice and the poor of Jerusalem is made clear in 1:21-26: Isaiah announces that Yahweh will again rule with justice (1).

The link between justice and Jerusalem arises from two concerns:

- (a) Jerusalem is the habitation of Yahweh, the source of justice (2).
- (b) Jerusalem is the habitation of the Davidic dynasty which was charged with ruling with justice (3).

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1. Vermeylen [71-105] claims that this passage is Deuteronomic but Gonçalves [219] is not convinced.
  2. Ps 48:11-12; 50:46; 76:9-11; 82:1,8; 89:15; 94:2; 96:10,13; 97:2; 98:9; 99:2-4; Isa 2:4; 28:15; 33:5,22; Jer 23:5-6; 33:16; Mic 4:3.
  3. 2 Sam 8:15; 23:3-4; 1 Kgs 10:9; Ps 45:7-8; 72:1-4,7,12-14; 101:1; 112:5; Prov 8:15; 16:12; 20:28; 29:4; 31:9; Isa 9:6; 11:1-3; Jer 21:12; 22:1-5; 23:5-6; 33:14-16; Hos 5:1; Zech 9:9.

The expression תורת אליהינו in 1:10 and תורת יהוה in 5:24 both denote the instruction of Yahweh concerning social justice. The idea contained in 30:12 is similar to 28:15b. Isa 30:9-14 denounces the injustices that ensue from the political decisions implicit in v6-8. Even though the prophet addresses the entire people (v9) the oracle is particularly applicable to the leaders.

Confidence in its own military might or in that of its allies and social injustice join together in that both are a refusal to accept the Lordship of Yahweh.

Jerusalem is only a sure refuge for its inhabitants if they rely on Yahweh and are just to each other. If Yahweh is the guarantee of justice, there must be no room for injustice in his city. The leaders of Jerusalem who were responsible for its political decisions and for the administration of justice have formally refused these responsibilities (28:12b, 30:9,15) and have followed their own designs.

Commenting upon the word שֶׁקֶר in Isa 28:15, Gonçalves [209] states that this word often denotes social injustice or the false administration of justice (1). It also denotes fraud (2).

Isa 28:15b may envisage the injustice of which those who rule Jerusalem are guilty - those who are supposed to rule with justice. Isa 28:16 has contacts with 14:32 and shares the same concerns: the afflicted of his people in 14:32 corresponds to the concern for justice and righteousness in 28:16.

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1. Ex 20:16; Lev 5:22; 19:12; Deut 19:18; Ps 6:11; 12:17; 16:5; 19:5,9; 25:18; Isa 32:7; Zech 8:17.
  2. Ex 23:7; Lev 19:11; 2 Sam 18:13; Prov 6:17; 20:17; 21:6; Ps 69:5; 119:69,78,86; Isa 49:3,13; Jer 6:13; 8:8,10; 9:4; 23:14; Hos 7:1; Mic 6:12.

Chapter 7

ISAIAH 33

## Chapter 7

ISAIAH 33

## INTRODUCTION

The classic study of Isa 33 is that of Gunkel [1924: 177-208] who categorized it as a *prophetic liturgy*, by which he meant a poetic composition performed by alternate voices, the individual parts belonging to different genres. The chapter opens with a threat against the destroyer and contains a *Volksklagelied* (v1-6). The following section (v7-9) intensifies the lament to which v10-12 responds in the form of an oracle. V14-16 constitute a *Toraliturgie* and the chapter ends with an eschatological hymn of salvation in v17-24. Gunkel did not, however, suggest a liturgical context for the chapter. His classification was an attempt to make sense of a section which contains widely different material, frequent changes in person and a heavy dependence on vocabulary and themes from the Psalms. His approach has guided the direction of subsequent studies [e.g. Kaiser, Vermeylen, Wildberger] until more recently Murray [1982: 200-17] has suggested that ch 33 should be seen as a ritual for the control of hostile spirits - both supernatural and political: Isa 33:1 is an old apotropaic curse against their destructive force. The author of ch 33 revised ancient ritual in the composition of the chapter. Murray's argument is based largely on the vocabulary of the chapter and its links with other texts particularly Ps 46 and Isa 24 and in turn their links with yet other texts. His evidence is cumulative and the links often indirect and elusive; but the main benefit of his study is that he breaks down the aura surrounding the term *prophetic liturgy*.

For the purposes of this work, the possibility of a liturgical setting

for Isa 33 is less important than its literary connections and function within chs 28-33. Sweeney [60] notes the similarity in vocabulary between ch 33 and chs 34-35 and suggests that chs 33-35 provides a climax for chs 28-32. Chs 28-32 discuss judgment which leads to the time of restoration when the king will preside over a time of peace, justice, understanding and righteousness. Chs 33-35 provide a dramatic effect with the liturgical setting of ch 33 and the announcement that it is Yahweh who will be king. This unit, according to Sweeney [62], can be entitled "Announcement of Yahweh's assumption of Kingship". Close connections have already been made between ch 33 and other contexts. Gunkel [195] noted the obvious connection between his *Toraliturgie* and Ps 15; 24:3-6. Murray [206-8] argues for a close connection between Isa 33 and Ps 46 and Isa 24 (1). Vermeylen [1977: 432-3] points out the connections within ch 33 itself: in v14-16, the epithets applied to Yahweh in v5-6a are now attributed to the just:

<u>V14-16</u>	<u>V5-6</u>
הלך צרקה	מלא צרקה
מרחם ישכון	שכן מרום
משגבו	נשגב יהוה
מימין נאמנים	אמונת עתיו

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1. Similarities with Ps 46: in both Ps 46 and Isa 33, Yahweh is invoked in time of trial (צרָה). His intercession is hoped for in the morning (לבקרים). In both the nations (המוֹן) roar. In both there are contrasting peaceful waters relating to Jerusalem (Isa 33:21; Ps 46:4). In both Yahweh will punish by fire (Isa 33:11,14; Ps 46:10). In both Yahweh is exalted (Isa 33:5; Ps 46:11). In Ps 46:12 Yahweh is a stronghold (משגב) and in Isa 33:15 he promises a stronghold to the just. In both, hostile forces are called on to acknowledge (יִרְעוּ) Yahweh's might (Isa 33:13; Ps 46:11). Murray's similarities with ch 24 are essentially the same as in the present section under v7-9.

Kaiser [1974: 346-8] briefly points out the connection between 33:17-24 and 32:1-8,14-22. An examination of the links in vocabulary and themes helps to clarify whether ch 33 elaborates on the questions raised in chs 28-32 or whether, as Sweeney suggests, it is more orientated towards chs 34-35.

The section on Isa 33 by Childs [1967: 112-17] provides a bridge from Gunkel's interest in the cultic and liturgical setting of the chapter to the place and function of the chapter in its present literary context of chs 28-33. Vermeylen [1977: 429] and Roberts [1983: 15] are alone in attributing v1 to Isaiah in the year 701, Roberts seeing in the woe oracle an attempt to comfort the oppressed people. Mowinckel [1921: 235] placed ch 33 at the time of Josiah. Barth [46 and 287] and Clements [1980a: 264-5] attribute the whole of the chapter to the Babylonian exile. Babylon is the destroyer in v1 but because it has not yet been destroyed it must come from a date before 536. Ch 33 is a reflection on the message of Isaiah in the light of the fall of Jerusalem. Although Wildberger [1286] treats the chapter as three units, he concludes that it is probable that the three parts grew out of the same situation and stem from the same author: he places [1288] the chapter in the early Persian period. But Duhm [216], Marti [242] and Kaiser [1974: 342] point to the Maccabean age - in particular to the attack on Jerusalem by Antiochus Eupater in 163 BC.

Childs [1967: 114] is content to describe the chapter as "post-exilic". It presupposes the destruction of Jerusalem and awaits the restoration of Zion with expectancy when the oppressor will be destroyed, Jerusalem freed of sinners and the new Zion established under the kingship of Yahweh. The liturgy goes from a reflection on the past to fervent

prayers of the present worshippers, to elaborate sketches of the coming deliverance. Childs [115] sees v1 as late but having close connections with the content of Isaiah's oracles against Assyria. The Isaianic schema for the understanding of Assyria's role has become a typical pattern for Israel's enemy *par excellence*. V1 does not refer to the *historical* Assyria but to *any* enemy of Zion and of Yahweh: רַעֲוֵי is commonly used in the Psalms to refer to the wicked in general and, secondly, the cultic setting of v2 separates the prayer from any specific historical situation. The Assyria in v1 is an Assyria that presents a perpetual threat – so the need to be delivered from this threat is ongoing – thus the reason why such an idea was incorporated into a cultic celebration such as ch 33. In this way the memory of the Assyrian threat remained in the memory of Israel and was preserved in the cult. Within this perspective Childs sees ch 33 very much as a reflection of Israel on her past. Older motifs (e.g. the vocabulary in v2-6) have been formed into a new constellation. The cultic tradition has provided a framework in which the past is understood.

### Isaiah 33: 1-6

#### VOCABULARY

רַעֲוֵי: Apart from an isolated instance in Judg 5:27, the word is restricted to prophetic literature and to a lesser extent to wisdom literature (1). In prophetic literature the root occurs in 23 texts in Jeremiah (2), in 6 texts in Isaiah (3) twice in Hosea, Zechariah, and once in Ezekiel, Micah,

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1. Job 12:6; Prov 11:3; 19:26; 24:15; Ps 17:9; 91:6; 137:8.
  2. Jer 4:13,20,30; 6:26; 9:18; 10:20; 12:12; 15:8; 25:36; 47:4; 48:1,8,15,18,20,32; 49:3,10,28; 51:48,53,55,56.
  3. Isa 15:1; 16:4; 21:2; 23:1,14; 33:1.

Joel, Nahum (1). In prophetic literature, the root normally refers to a nation that is being destroyed or to its destroyer. In Jeremiah, it is often a question of Jerusalem's destruction (2) and the destroyer is Assyria (6:26): but towards the end of the book, it is the foreign nations that are threatened with destruction – the Ammonites in 49:3; Edom in 49:10; Kedar in 49:28; Moab in 48:1,8,15,18,20,32 and Babylon in 51:48,53,55,56. In Isaiah it is the nations which are threatened with destruction: Moab in 15:1; Babylon by Elam and Media in 21:2; Tyre in 23:1,14; in the context of 16:4 the destroyer is the destroyer of Moab. The noun שׁוֹרֵר occurs in Isa 22:4; 60:18, in both cases referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. Elsewhere it is either Israel or the nations that are destroyed (3).

Therefore in all texts שׁוֹרֵר refers to an action or city that is destroyed by its enemy. In Isa 33:1, the destroyer is not explicitly identified. Commentators disagree as to the identity of the שׁוֹרֵר. Vermeylen [1977: 429] sees in v1 an authentic Isaian woe oracle dating from 701 and so the שׁוֹרֵר is Assyria. Roberts [1983: 19] sees the verse in the light of 10:5-22 where Assyria is identified as the enemy: the background of the events of 33:1 is recorded in 2 Kgs 18:17-37 which Roberts takes as historically accurate. Barth [46] and Clements [1980a: 264-5] date the passage to the Babylonian exile and so it has to be Babylon. Kaiser [1974: 342], relying on his interpretation of the word in Isa 16:4; 21:2 and Hab 2:5, argues that the term refers to the leader of the nations who will rage over the earth destroying and annihilating and who will finally storm against the city of God. It corresponds exactly, argues Kaiser, to the figure of Gog

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1. Ez 32:12; Hos 10:2,4; Zech 11:2,3; Mic 2:4; Joel 1:10; Nah 3:7.
  2. Jer 4:13,20,30; 9:18; 10:20; 12:12; 15:8; 25:36.
  3. Ephraim in Hos 2:14; Israel in Joel 1:10; Nineveh in Nah 3:7; Babylon in Ps 91:6; Lebanon in Zech 11:2,3.



in Ez 38.

It may be more profitable to adopt the approach of Childs [1967: 115] who moves away from establishing a precise identity and who sees in שׂוֹרֵר a reference to Assyria but an Assyria that can, in the memory of Israel, be taken to symbolize any threat to the people or to Zion. Wildberger, too, [1291-2] sees the reference to the enemy in ch 33:1f as a generalized statement: it refers to any threat to Zion. In any case, in the context of chs 28-33, there is likely to be in 33:1 a veiled reference to Assyria - the point of which is to reverse its role in 30:31; 31:8-9. The verb שׂוֹרֵר is used in Jeremiah very extensively to show clearly that the destroyer of Jerusalem will itself be destroyed; Isa 33:1 may also have the same function.

בִּגְדָּה: The root occurs in prophetic literature less frequently than שׂוֹרֵר and more often in Proverbs and Psalms. In prophetic literature it occurs in Isaiah in 21:2; 24:16; 33:1; 48:8; and in Jeremiah in 3:7,8,10,11,20; 5:11; 9:1; 12:1 (1). It occurs often in the Psalms (2), Proverbs (3) and once in Job (6:15) (4). The roots שׂוֹרֵר, בִּגְדָּה appear together in Isa 21:2; 33:1; Prov 11:3.

The root בִּגְדָּה occurs in quite a different context from שׂוֹרֵר. It denotes acting in a deceitful, disloyal or unfaithful manner. In Psalms, Proverbs and Job, the verb is used of the actions of the wicked as opposed to the just. In prophetic literature it denotes more specifically the unfaithful relationship of Israel towards Yahweh. This is especially true of the

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1. Elsewhere in prophetic literature in Hos 5:7; 6:7; Zeph 3:4; Hab 1:13; 2:5.
  2. Ps 25:3; 59:6; 73:15; 78:57; 119:158.
  3. Prov 11:3,6; 13:2,15; 21:18,22; 22:12; 23:28; 25:19.
  4. Elsewhere in Ex 21:8; Judg 9:23; 1 Sam 14:33.

instances of the word in Jeremiah. In Isaiah, **בגר** occurs as a parallel to **שרר** in 21:1 to denote the way Elam destroys and plunders Babylon. In 24:16b, a difficult verse which many commentators see as a combination of later glosses, the context seems to suggest that those who act unfaithfully refer to a particular group of the wicked – perhaps as Vermeylen [1977: 359] suggests, a group who are unsympathetic and disloyal to the Law. In 48:8, the verb denotes those who are unfaithful in their relationship to Yahweh.

In 33:1 the close intricate structure between the two verbs suggests that they are intended to be synonymous. If the verse only contained **שוור** then a reference to Assyria or to some other political power would be obvious. But **שרר** can be found in contexts where it refers to the attitude of the wicked and not at all to political oppressors (Job 12:6; Prov 11:3; 19:26; 24:15; Ps 17:9; 137:8). Outside of Isaiah, both verbs are parallel only in Prov 11:3 where they refer to the attitude of the wicked as opposed to the just.

In the context of ch 33, the attitude of the wicked in v1 contrasts with the attitude of the just who wait for Yahweh in v2. There is an abrupt change from the second person singular, referring to the wicked in v1, to the second person singular referring to Yahweh in v2. The contrast between the attitude of the wicked in v1 and the attitude of the just in v2 introduces the three protagonists in v1-6: Yahweh, the just and the wicked. The use of the singular in v1 to refer to the wicked in v1 is reminiscent of 29:20; 32:5-6. The two verbs in v1 leave room for some ambiguity about the identity of the agent. Childs [1967: 115] is right to see Assyria as a symbol of the threat presented by the attitude of the wicked.

תָּמַם occurs in Isaiah in 16:4; 18:5; 33:1.

נָלַתַּךְ, taken as the hiphil of נָלַה, is a hapax: but Wildberger [1285] emends the word to כָּלַתַּךְ from the root כָּלַה "to cease" which makes a better parallel with תָּמַם.

## Verse 2

חָנַן: (see 30:18,19).

קָוָה: The root occurs most often in the Psalms (1) and in Isaiah (2). Apart from Job (3), it is rarely found elsewhere (4).

In the Psalms, the verb denotes the attitude of the just man who waits for Yahweh: it is a sign of hope and trust. It is an attitude directly opposed to the attitude of the wicked, e.g. Ps 24:3 where those who wait for Yahweh (קָוָה) are contrasted with those who are faithless (בָּגַד). In Ps 37:9, those who wait for Yahweh are opposed to the wicked and in Ps 37:34, those who wait for Yahweh will look upon the destruction of the wicked.

Second Isaiah often highlights the advantages of those who wait for Yahweh (40:31; 49:23; 51:5; 64:2). In First Isaiah, 25:9 anticipates the emphasis on this attitude in Second Isaiah when it states that:

On that day it will be said, "We have waited on Yahweh".

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1. Ps 25:3,5,21; 27:14; 37:9,34; 39:8; 40:2; 52:11; 56:7; 69:7,21; 119:95; 130:5.
  2. Isa 5:2,4,7; 25:9; 26:8; 33:2; 40:31; 49:23; 51:5; 59:9,11; 60:9; 64:2.
  3. Job 3:9; 6:19; 7:2; 17:13; 30:26.
  4. Gen 1:9; 49:18; Lam 2:16; 3:25; Hos 12:7; Mic 5:6.

Both 26:8 and 33:2 express this attitude in the form of a prayer as in the Psalms.

לבקרים: In Ps 101:8, the Psalmist declares he will destroy all the wicked in the land morning by morning.

צרה: (see 30:6). The phrase עץ צרה occurs in Jer 14:8; 15:11; Dan 12:1. The phrase יום צרה occurs in Ps 20:2; 50:15; Prov 24:10; Nah 1:7; Hab 3:16; Zeph 1:15; Ob 12,14. Yahweh is a saviour in time of trouble in Ps 20:2; 50:15; Jer 14:8; 15:11; Nah 1:7.

### Verse 3

המון: (see 29:5). Vermeylen [1977: 430-31] points out that the noun is never applied to Yahweh but refers to the numerous assailants attacking Jerusalem.

גוים, עמים: (see 30:28).

מרוממתך: According to BDB [928], this is the preposition מן followed by an abstract noun used as an infinitive formed from the polel stem of רום with the pronominal suffix. Syr, LXX and Vulg all understand the word as a derivative from רום. Roberts notes [1983: 18] that the author uses the polel imperfect of the same verb to announce a rising up of the deity in v10.

נָרַר: The root occurs most often in Isaiah (1) and the Psalms (2). Elsewhere it is found scattered throughout the OT (3).

In Isaiah, it refers to the flight of Madmenah in 10:31; of Moab in 16:2; of Israel in 22:3. The fugitive, however, must be treated with consideration in 16:3 and 21:14.

נָפַץ: The verb occurs parallel to נָרַר only in Isa 33:3. It is found scattered throughout the OT (4) but occurs most often in Jeremiah (13:14; 22:28; 27:9; 48:12) and 9 times in 51:20-23 where Israel is the hammer with which Yahweh will break the nations in pieces. The noun נֶפֶץ is a hapax and occurs only in Isa 30:30.

#### Verse 4

שָׁלַלְכֶם: There is no reason why the noun should have a plural suffix and so BHS and Irwin [141] divide the word to give שָׁלַל כְּמוֹ. שָׁלַל occurs in Isaiah in 8:1,3,4; 9:2; 10:2,6; 33:4,23; 53:12. In 8:1,3,4 it is contained in a proper name to indicate how swiftly the spoil of Samaria will be carried away. In 9:2, it is part of a simile to express the joy of the nation.

חֲסִיל occurs in 1 Kgs 8:37; Ps 78:46; Isa 33:4; Joel 1:4; 2:25. In all texts the locust is noted for the enormous destruction it brings about.

שָׁקַק occurs in Isa 33:4; Prov 28:15 (where it describes a bear); Joel 2:9 and a hithpael form occurs in Nah 2:5.

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1. Isa 14:31; 16:2,3; 21:14,15; 22:3; 33:3.
  2. Ps 31:12; 55:8; 64:9; 68:13.
  3. Gen 31:40; 2 Sam 23:; Job 15:23; 18:18; 20:8; Prov 27:8; Jer 4:25; 9:9; 49:5; Hos 7:13; Esth 6:1; Neh 3:7.
  4. Gen 9:9; Judg 7:19; 1 Sam 3:11; 1 Kgs 5:23; Ps 2:9; 137:9; Isa 11:2; Dan 12:7.

The word מִשַּׁק, a construct form, is a hapax. Ginsburg [57] reverses ש and ק and reads a niph'al מִשַּׁק. However this root only appears as a polel meaning "to gather stubble" [BDB: 905] (1). Irwin [141] derives the word from נִשַּׁק meaning "weapons".

### Verse 5

שָׁגַב: (see 30:13). Yahweh is the subject in Isa 2:11,17; 33:5; Ps 148:13. Gunkel [178] corrected the participles נִשְׁגַּב and שָׁגַב to perfects but Roberts [1983: 18] sees no need for this since participles normally derive their tenses from the context, which in this case contains many perfects.

מָרוֹם: (see 32:15).

צָרָה, מִשְׁפָּט: (see 28:17).

### Verse 6

The construct forms of the nouns may be explained by the fact that they are governed by חֶסֶן at the start and יְהוָה at the end of the line. Roberts [1983: 18] suggests that neither the third masculine singular perfect וְהָיָה which clashes with the second person masculine singular on עֲתִיךָ nor the word עֲתִיךָ itself seem fitting. The 1QIsa reading עֲרִים in v8 suggests the possible correction of עֲתִיךָ to עֲרִיךָ "your covenant": Roberts [18] suggests the following emendation for v6a:

יְהוָה אֱמוּנַת עֲרִיךָ חֶסֶן

"Yahweh, Faithfulness to your covenant was her wealth."

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1. The root occurs in Ex 5:7,12; Num 15:32,33; 1 Kgs 17:10,12; Zeph 2:1.

אמונה is a quality associated with Yahweh or one which he bestows upon his people especially in the Psalms (1). This is also the case in Isaiah in 25:1; 33:6 and it is a quality of the anointed one in 11:5.

חסן: The niph'al occurs in 23:18. The noun חסן occurs in Prov 15:6; 27:24; Isa 33:6; Jer 20:5; Ez 22:25. It generally denotes wealth in the literal sense of the word and not in a figurative sense as in Isa 33:6.

ישועה: (see 30:18).

יראת יהוה occurs in Isaiah only in 11:2,3; 29:13; 33:6. It occurs in the Psalms (2) but particularly in Proverbs (3).

אוצרו: Roberts [1983: 18], notes that the form is masculine but that Yahweh is hardly the antecedent given the second person singular reference to him earlier in the verse. Roberts suggests that the antecedent is Zion and therefore feminine: the original suffix may have been ה which an early scribe misread as a *mater lectionis* for י (4).

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1. Ps 36:6; 37:3; 40:11; 88:12; 89:2,3,6,9,25,34,50; 92:3; 96:13; 98:3; 100:5; 119:30,75,86,90,138; 143:1. Also Deut 32:4.
  2. Ps 19:10; 34:12; 111:10.
  3. Prov 1:7,9; 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:12; 14:26,27; 15:16,33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4,17; 23:17; 31:30.
  4. Roberts [18] notes that from the time of Isaiah to the exile, the letter ה was used as a *mater lectionis* for both ה and ו. Other evidence for textual corruption due to uncertainty over whether to read ה as ו or ה is found in Isa 30:33: תפתה for תפתו, מדרתו for מדרתה, בנה for מדרתה.

## CONTEXT

The unity of v1-6 is tenuous. The abrupt change of addressees is jarring and confusing. The **בוגר, שורר** are addressed in the second person singular in v1: in v2-3 Yahweh is addressed in the second person singular but in v5-6 Yahweh is in the third person: furthermore it is difficult to know to whom the suffixes in **עתיך** and **אוצרו** refer. If they refer to Zion, then they have to be emended to the feminine form. The abrupt transitions put into clear focus the relationship of Yahweh towards the just and the wicked - the wicked alluded to in v1 and the just in v2. In v1 the woe is directed against the **בוגר, שורר** who do not feature again in the unit (1). The woe, therefore, is limited to v1. Perhaps the somewhat artificial nature of the verse reads more naturally alongside the other woes than it does within v1-6. In other words, v1 introduces the theme that loosely holds the chapter together - namely the eventual triumph of the just over the sinner - a triumph accredited to the power of Yahweh. This theme should be read alongside the other woes .. the condemnation of Ephraim (28:1), Ariel (29:1), those who hide their counsel from Yahweh (29:15), the rebellious children (30:1), those who go down to Egypt (31:1). Isa 33:1 is much less specific in its address than the other woes but its position as the last of the series gives it a certain authority. It would also add weight to the interpretation of v1 as a group within Israel rather than an external enemy since all the other woes are directed against such groups. This interpretation depends upon how much weight is given to seeing **בוגר** as a term denoting the sinner as opposed to the just. Within v1-6, v1 stands in an isolated position and serves as an introduction.

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1. The "nations" and "peoples" in v3 can hardly refer back to a second person singular.



V2-6 are unified and dominated by the person of Yahweh who is mentioned neither in v1 nor in v7-10; but the unity is superficial since the first person plural in v2 (used only in 30:2; 30:21-22 within chs 28-33) fades out after v3 and in v5 Yahweh is in the third person. V4 offers two similes that add nothing to the development of the unit.

V2-6 introduce nothing new to these chapters: both the vocabulary and epithets used of Yahweh only echo what has been already said in chs 28-32. Ch 33 may borrow heavily from the Psalms (1) but it also borrows from its own previous chapters:

חנף	picks up 30:18,19.
קוה	is similar to the verb חכה in 30:18.
זרע	refers back to 30:30.
ישועה	refers back to the words of Yahweh in 30:15.
בקר	echoes the constant danger present in 28:19.
צרה	resumes the theme of 30:20.
מקול המון	occurs in 29:7.
עמים, גוים	occurs in 29:7; 30:28.
רום	occurs in 30:18.
שגב	occurs in 2:11,17; 30:13.
מרום	occurs in 32:15.
ציון	occurs in 30:19; 31:4,9.
משפט, צדקה	occurs in 28:16; 32:1,16,17. The theme is connected to Zion in 28:16 and 31:9-32:1.
חכמה	occurs in 28:29 and 29:14.
דעת	occurs in 28:9.
יראת יהוה	occurs in 29:13.
אוצר	see 30:6 where the treasures are materialistic.

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1. Murray [208] points out close similarities in vocabulary and imagery between ch 33 and Ps 46 in particular.

Isaiah 33: 7-9

## VOCABULARY

Verse 7

אַרְאִלִּים is a hapax. KB [80] notes three possibilities: heroes, priests, inhabitants. Wildberger [1294] describes it as "simply not understandable". He traces the attempts to explain it from the root ירא as in the LXX or from the root ראה as in 1QIsa, Vulg while Barthélemy [233] seeks to establish the MT as אַרְאִלִּים "I will make myself seen by them." Kimchi and Ibn Ezra thought it meant "messengers" because of the parallel to מַלְאכֵי שְׁלוֹם. Watts [422] discusses the suggestion that the word should be divided, resulting in אַרִי-אֵל "lion of God" and consequently a meaning such as "the valiant one". Irwin [144] translates אַרְאִלִּים as "leaders" but also considers the possibility that אֵל is a divine name parallel to שְׁלוֹם in the next line: אַר-אֵל could then be translated as "kinsmen of El" which would point to the patron God of David's city which appears in אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל and יְרוּשָׁלַם. Vermeylen [1977: 432] sees a definite allusion both to the word אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל in 29:1 and to the general context of 29:1-7: it is a case of actualization - the Judeans live in a situation of distress similar to their ancestors and wait for Yahweh to deliver them as they did in olden days. Schwantes [165] argues that the pointing should be אַרְיִילִים and the word understood as members of the royal bodyguard who trace their ancestry back to the אֶרֶץ גָּד of the tribe of Gad: Schwantes [159] sees אַרִיִל in the Mesha Inscription, line 13 as a proper name and connects it with an ancestor of a clan of Gad recorded in Gen 46:16 and Num 26:15-17.

צֶעֶק (see 30:19).

חצה occurs in Ex 12:46; 1 Kgs 6:6; 2 Chron 24:8; 29:16; 33:15; Prov 5:16; Isa 33:7. In Isa 42:2, בחוץ is found. The plural חוצות is found in Isa 5:25; 10:6; 15:3; 24:11; 51:20. The streets are often the location of slaughter, destruction and mourning (5:25; 10:6; 51:20): Moab wails for her destruction in the streets of her cities in 15:3 and there is wailing in the streets when Yahweh destroys the whole earth in 24:11 (1). In 33:7, חצה is the place where the people mourn for the destruction described in v8-9.

מלאך: (see 30:4).

שלום: Roberts [1983: 19] notes that in Ps 76:3, the word שלום is attested as a poetic name for Jerusalem. Even if the word here is שלום (peace), he still sees an intentional *double entendre*.

בבה: (see 30:19).

מר: The verb occurs in Isa 22:4; 24:9; 38:17 and the adjective in 5:20; 33:7; 38:15. The closest text is 22:4 where the prophet weeps bitterly for the destruction of his people.

### Verse 8

שם: The root in Isaiah normally refers to the destruction brought upon Israel and Judah by Yahweh (5:9; 6:11) (2) – a process which is reversed in Second Isaiah where Yahweh brings life to the desolate cities (49:8,19;

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1. The servant in 42:2, on the contrary, does not cry out or make his voice heard in the street.
  2. In this regard Clements [1980a: 267] suggests that 33:8 is the fulfilment of 6:11.

52:14; 54:1,3; 61:4). But the word also describes the destruction of other cities - Babylon in 13:9; the cities of Moab in 15:6; Damascus in 17:9; the unnamed city in 24:12. Isa 33:8 is the only instance of the verb found in First Isaiah: normally it is the noun שמה or שממה.

מסלות occurs in Isa 7:3; 11:16; 19:23; 33:8; 35:8; 36:2; 40:3; 49:11; 59:7; 62:10. In 7:3; 36:2, it is used literally specifying a particular location but elsewhere its sense is metaphorical. Second Isaiah opens with the theme of a new highway in 40:3 - a theme sustained through 49:11; 62:10 and 35:8. The two late texts, 11:16; 19:23, also use the word in a positive context of peace. The remaining two texts (33:8; 59:7) use the word in a different sense: the highways lie wasted and desolate. In 59:7 it is the wicked, the sinners against Yahweh, whose highways are desolate: this may also be the significance of the theme in 33:8 since 30:8 denotes the activity of the wicked. Another possibility is that the theme is inserted in 33:8 to prepare for the reversal of the theme in ch 35 and in Second Isaiah.

שבת: (see 30:11).

עבר ארח: (see 30:11).

הפר: The root occurs in Isa 8:10; 14:27; 24:5,19; 33:8; 44:25. Throughout the OT, it is used with ברית (1) or to denote the breaking of the

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1. Gen 17:14; Lev 26:15,44; Deut 31:16,20; Judg 2:1; 1 Kgs 15:19; 2 Chron 16:3; Isa 24:5; 33:8; Jer 11:10; 14:21; 31:32; 33:20,21; Ez 16:59; 17:15,16,18,19; 44:7; Zech 11:10.

commandment of Yahweh (1) or simply of destroying a plan (2). The closest text to 33:8 is 24:5.

ברית: (see 28:15).

מאם: (see 30:12).

ערים occurs in Isa 8:2; 19:20; 43:9,10; 44:8,9; 55:4. 1QIsa reads ערים and most commentators including Barthélemy [234] emend the word accordingly but Irwin [145] discusses the possibility of retaining the MT and derives it from a root ער "to protect"; he suggests that ערים means "protectors" of the covenant who guarantee its existence. To support the reading ערים he points to a parallel in Job 8:6 where עיר, שלם are found together.

אנוש: Apart from 3 instances (Deut 32:26; 2 Chron 14:10; Jer 20:10) אנוש is found exclusively in the Psalms (3), Job (4) and Isaiah (5). Hillers [257] reads ענוש (tribute) as a cognate with Ugaritic *unuššu*.

### Verse 9

אכל: The verb occurs in Isa 3:26; 19:8; 24:4,7; 33:9; 57:18; 61:2,3; 66:10 and the noun occurs in 60:20; 61:3. The root אכלל occurs in Isa 16:8; 19:8; 24:4,7; 33:9. The two words occur together in 19:8; 24:4,7; 33:9 (6).

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1. Num 15:31; Ps 119:126; Ezra 9:14.
  2. 2 Sam 15:34; 17:14; Isa 8:10; 14:27; 44:25.
  3. Ps 8:5; 9:20,21; 10:18; 55:14; 56:2; 66:12; 73:5; 90:3; 103:15; 104:15; 144:3.
  4. Job 4:17; 5:17; 7:1,17; 9:2; 10:4,5; 13:9; 14:19; 15:14; 25:4,6; 28:4,13; 32:8; 33:12,26; 36:25.
  5. Isa 8:1; 13:7,12; 24:6; 33:8; 51:7,12; 56:2.
  6. Elsewhere in Jer 14:2; Lam 2:8; Joel 1:10; Hos 4:3.

In Isaiah mourning and lamentation are for the collapse and ruin of a city or nation: for Jerusalem in 3:26; Moab in 16:8; Egypt in 19:8; the whole earth in 24:4,7; the earth also in 33:8 but Lebanon is specifically named. Elsewhere, when the two words occur together, the mourning and lamentation are over Jerusalem. In Second Isaiah, mourning sometimes denotes sorrow for sin or turning towards Yahweh (57:18; 60:20).

חפיר: The verb occurs most often in Proverbs (13:5; 19:26) and Psalms (34:6; 35:4,26; 40:15; 70:3; 71:24; 83:10) in contexts where the wicked, those who do not seek Yahweh, will be put to shame. In prophetic literature, the verb occurs in Jer 15:9 and 50:12 and Mic 3:7 but particularly in Isaiah (1:29; 24:23; 33:9; 54:4). In Jer 15:9, it is Jerusalem which is put to shame before Yahweh but later it is Babylon in 50:12. In Isa 1:29, as in the Psalms, it is the sinners of Zion who will be put to shame and in 24:23, the sun and moon in an eschatological context. In 33:9, it is Lebanon.

לבנון, כרמל: (see 29:17).

שרון occurs in Isa 33:9; 35:2; 65:2 and elsewhere in Josh 12:18; 1 Chron 5:16; 27:29; Cant 2:1. In Isa 35:2, Lebanon, Carmel, Sharon blossom: in 65:10, Sharon is rich but only for the just.

בשן occur in Isa 2:13 and 33:9. In both texts, Lebanon and Bashan symbolize the proud that Yahweh will bring low. In Nah 1:4 a similar phrase occurs:

אמלל בשן וכרמל ופרח לבנון אמלל

where Bashan, Carmel and Lebanon wither before the power of Yahweh. In Amos 2:1, the phrase ראש הכרמל is found.

קמל occurs only in the OT in Isa 19:6 and 33:9. It suggests an image of drying up. BDB [888] suggests "to become decayed, mouldy". Wildberger [1294] suggests "dead plants turning black".

ערבה: Apart from 33:9, the use of the word is restricted in Isaiah to 40:3; 41:19 where it is used in a context where the desert springs to life. This is also the case in 35:1,6 which employs the same theme.

נער occurs in Isa 33:9,15; 52:2. Elsewhere it occurs in various contexts but has the basic meaning "to shake" or "to shake off" (1). In the context of v9, it must denote, as the other verbs do, withering or fading away, perhaps as BDB [654] and RSV translate "to shake off leaves".

## CONTEXT

V7 intensifies the appeal to Yahweh for help found in v2. In 30:19, זעק, בכה occur together. When "the people in Zion who dwell in Jerusalem" cry out and weep, Yahweh hears them. The significance of the terms מלאכי-שלום and אראלם is obviously positive; they contrast with the שורר, בוגר of v1 and are reminiscent of the righteous whose work is peace in 32:17.

V8-9 resemble ch 24 in vocabulary: in v7 the violent ones cry without (חצה) while in 24:11, there is an outcry in the streets (בחוצות). In v8, the highways are desolate (נשמו) while in 24:12 it is the city (שמה). In v8b, the "traveller" ceases (שבת) and in 24:8, joy ceases. In v8 and 24:6, the word אנוש is used. In v9, the land mourns and languishes

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1. Ex 14:27; Judg 16:20; Job 38:13; Ps 109:23; 136:15; Neh 5:13.

(אבל, אמלל): the same verbs are used of the land in 24:4 and of the vine in 24:7.

In ch 24 the reason for the desolation and destruction of the whole earth is the sins of the people summed up in v5. In 33:7-9, v8 sums up the sins of the people - sins which are reflected and mirrored in the landscape in v9. The language used in v8 is highly figurative: *מסלות*, *אבר-ארח*, are parallel. In 59:7, it is the highways of the wicked that are desolate and destroyed (1). In 24:16b the word *בוגר* occurs.

The word *ארח* apart from Mic 4:2; Joel 2:7, is only found in prophetic literature in Isa chs 1-41 (8 times). It refers to the way of the righteous which is Yahweh's way. It is therefore tempting to see *עבר-ארח* referring to the righteous person who walks in the way of Yahweh: the verb *שבת* would then denote, as it does in 30:11, ceasing to follow in the way of Yahweh. Against this, however, is the fact that *עבר* would tend to mean, (if it is used figuratively) "to transgress" as it does in 24:5 (*עבר תורת*) rather than "to observe".

In Isaiah *ברית* refers to the covenant with Yahweh (55:3; 59:21; 61:8). In 28:15,18, the covenant with Sheol may be an ironic turn in this pattern. In the context of 24:5, the everlasting covenant is likely to be that between Yahweh and man and not between man and his neighbour. So in the light of the word elsewhere especially 24:5, the covenant in 33:8 is likely to be the covenant with Yahweh.

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1. The imagery of the breakdown of the ways of the sinner is continued in 59:7-8: they do not know the way of peace (*דרך*). There is no justice in their paths (*מעולותם*). They have made their ways crooked (*נתיבותיהם*). No one who walks in them (*כל דרך בו*) knows peace.



The verb **סָדָה** is often associated with rejecting Yahweh or realities associated with him: Torah in 5:24; waters of Shiloah in 8:6; his word in 30:12. To reject the witnesses associated with the covenant of Yahweh may be the same as rejecting Yahweh himself. In v8, who or what is the subject of **לֹא חָשַׁב**, **מִמָּה**? The verbs are not in the niphal and so **לֹא חָשַׁב** may mean "mankind does not consider" (that the covenant is broken). **אָנוּשׁ** may be a general term as is **אָרֶץ** in the following line.

In v9, the mourning of the land recalls 24:4,7. **חַפִּיר** is used of sinners who will be confounded in the Psalms and in Prov 1:29. **קָמַל** is only found in 19:6 where it is associated with the wrath of Yahweh. In 29:17, in a theme typical of Second Isaiah, Lebanon becomes a fruitful field. In 35:2, Lebanon, Carmel, Sharon blossom. In 65:10, Sharon is rich but only for the just. The noun **עֵרְבָה** is restricted to 35:1,6; 40:3; 41:19 where the desert springs to life.

V8-9 offer a theme which is easily picked up and reversed in Second Isaiah. The highways and paths are built up and thrown open. The covenant is renewed (55:3; 59:21; 61:8). The desert provides water; the land springs to life and no longer mourns. In 29:17f, Lebanon becomes fruitful "on that day" when conversion takes place (v18-19) and the wicked are cut off (v20-21); but 29:17f and 35:1f paint an image of the future (1 + perfect) while 33:8-9 deal with a present state of affairs.

Isaiah 33: 10-12

## VOCABULARY

Verse 10

עתה: The emphasis on "now" indicates an attempt at actualization.

קום: (see 28:21).

רום: (see 30:18).

נשא: (see 30:6). The niphal form occurs in 2:2,12,13; 6:1; 30:25; 33:10; 39:6; 40:4; 49:22; 52:13; 66:12.

In 2:12,13, Yahweh acts against the proud, those who are "raised up". In 6:1, Yahweh is raised up in glory (נשא ונשא). He raises up his hand against the nations in 49:22. Zion is raised up in 2:12 and the servant in 52:13.

Verse 11

קש, חשש: The vocabulary and imagery of 33:11 is similar to 5:24:

כאכל קש לשון אש וחשש

חשש occurs in the OT only in 5:24 and 33:11. Isa 5:24 offers an explanation - such a fate is specifically for those who have rejected the law of Yahweh and despise his word.

קש occurs in Second Isaiah in 40:24; 41:2 where the rulers of the earth and the nations are as stubble that is blown away. In 47:14, it is the counsels upon which the people rely that are as insecure and worthless as stubble.

יֵלֶר, הרה: The metaphor of conceiving and giving birth to something as useless as chaff and stubble may be compared to the distress of the just

who bring forth wind in 26:18. The wicked conceive deceit and bring forth lies in Ps 7:15; Job 15:35; 59:4,13 (1) – a suitable metaphor in the context of the sinners of Zion in v14.

Fohrer [1967a: 137], Procksch [420] and Irwin [148] emend רוּחַ כְּנֶמֶץ to רוּחַ כְּמוֹ "spirit like" but Wildberger [1295] retains the MT, noting that there is nothing incongruous about the idea of the wicked digging their own graves.

V11 is therefore a mixed metaphor and contains two images: on the one hand the stubble and chaff that is destroyed by fire and on the other the idea of giving birth to something futile.

### Verse 12

שָׂרַף: The verb, common in Isaiah (2), only appears in the context of the burning of stubble in Isa 33:12; 47:14.

שֵׁיִר: The noun occurs only in Deut 27:2,4; Isa 33:12 and in Amos 2:1 where the bones of the king of Edom are burned in lime.

קוֹצִים: (see 32:13). Only found in 32:13 and 33:12 in Isaiah.

כִּסְסָה is used of the vine in Ps 80:17.

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1. The metaphor is to be distinguished from the image of the יִלְרָה used frequently in prophetic literature to denote the reaction to bad news, e.g. Isa 12:8; Jer 30:6.
  2. Isa 1:7; 9:4; 33:12; 44:16,19; 47:14; 64:10.

יִצַּת: The verb occurs in Isaiah in 9:17; 27:4; 33:12 (1). In 9:17, wickedness kindles the thickets of the forest; in 27:4, burning with fire expresses the anger and punishment of Yahweh. The phrase שָׁמִיר וְשִׁית occurs in the last two texts and is a phrase exclusive to First Isaiah but it does not occur in 33:12 where the word קוֹצִים is found instead. The author of 33:12 is not as consistent as the author of the phrase שָׁמִיר וְשִׁית. He seems to construct the imagery in the verse from vocabulary gleaned from several earlier texts.

## CONTEXT

Three words are used for the "rising up" of Yahweh נָשָׂא, רָוַם, קוּם. Yahweh rises up (קוּם) to avenge in Isa 2:19,21; 14:22; 28:21; (29:3); 31:2. This is a theme common in the Psalms (2).

רָוַם (3) describes the position of Yahweh in 6:1 (רָוַם וְנִשְׂא), his actions in 30:18; 33:10, and his exalted state in 25:1. In 32:15, his spirit is poured from on high (מֵרָוַם). In 33:3, Yahweh raises himself to scatter the nations; in 33:5, he dwells on high and in 33:16, the just man will dwell on the heights. נָשָׂא, as just noted, occurs in 6:1.

The three verbs taken together with the repetition of עָתָה explains the sudden and dramatic action of Yahweh.

V11-12 express the effects of Yahweh's anger introduced in v10.

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1. Over half of the occurrences of the verb are found in Jeremiah (2:15; 9:9; 11:16; 17:27; 21:14; 32:29; 43:12; 49:2,27; 50:32; 51:30; 58:3) but only in Jer 21:14 is it a question of Yahweh setting fire to the forest.
  2. Ps 3:8; 7:7; 9:20; 10:12; 17:13; 44:27; 74:22; 82:8; 132:8.
  3. The verb is often used to denote the attitude of the proud and arrogant (Isa 2:12,13,14; 10:15,33; 14:13; 37:23.)

The verses give the impression of an accumulation of words and images plucked from other contexts. From a literary point of view the verses are unsatisfying in that the images seem to contain too much detail. Yahweh speaks in v10: the addressees are abruptly introduced in v11 but in v12 the second person plural changes to עַמִּים in the third person plural.

The most dramatic result of the rising up of Yahweh is punishment by fire. The consuming fire אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת is reminiscent of the punishment of Yahweh dealt out to the nations in 29:6; 30:27,30. His breath, too, features in 30:28; but the image of the consuming fire is now combined with that of the burning of stubble, chaff and thorns - a theme which seems to have been derived from 5:24 since שֹׁחַ is only found there and in 33:11 in the whole of the OT. To these two themes is grafted a third - the metaphor of conceiving and giving birth to something profitless (normally deceit and lies) comes from Job 15:35; 59:4,13; Ps 7:15. The idea of the nations burned to lime introduces yet another image: שֵׂיִר is only found in Amos 2:1 where the bones of the king of Edom are burned to lime. V12b concludes with the theme of burning of thorns - a *reprise* of the image of the burning of stubble and chaff in v11a. Yet the vocabulary is different and worthy of note: apart from 33:12, the verb יָצַח is found in only two other places - 9:17; 27:4, verses which contain the phrase שָׂמִיר וְשִׁיחַ, exclusive to Isaiah. Isa 33:12 does not use this phrase as object of the verb יָצַח but rather קוֹצִים - a word found only elsewhere in Isaiah only in 32:13. Furthermore, the verb נָסַח is only found elsewhere in Ps 80:17. Finally, v12 may reverse the image found in 32:13 - the nations choking the people are now burned and destroyed.

So the conclusion to be drawn from these observations is that v11-12 is anthological in style. The author makes use of several different images to express the total destruction of the עמים.

Isaiah 33: 13-16

## VOCABULARY

Verse 13

שמע: (see 28:14; 32:9).

ידע, שמע occur together in Isaiah in 40:28; 48:8; 51:7. In Second Isaiah, the people must know that Yahweh is Lord but in 6:9 the people hear but do not know.

גברה: (see 28:6).

רחוקים: (see 30:2,7). Isa 66:19 is concerned with spreading the fame of the glory of Yahweh to the "far-off" coasts. Isa 46:12 uses רחוקים metaphorically to refer to those who are "far from deliverance". קרובים on the other hand may denote being near to deliverance (5:19; 41:1,5; 46:13).

Verse 14

חנף: (see 32:6).

חטא: (see 30:1).

פחד: In Isa 19:16,17, Egypt is terrified before the plan of Yahweh. In 12:2; 44:8, the just man does not fear before Yahweh while the evil (2:10,19,21), the inhabitants of the earth (24:17,18), those who trust in

idols (44:11) and sinners (33:14) are terrified.

רָעָה: The root occurs in prophetic literature only in Isa 33:14 (1). It generally denotes the reaction to bad news (2) – often before Yahweh (Ex 15:15; Ps 2:11; 48:7; 104:32). In Isa 32:14, sinners tremble before him.

גִּוַר: The verb occurs in Isa 5:17; 11:6; 16:4; 23:7; 33:14; 52:4; 54:15. Wildberger [1293] translates it as "finds protection."

אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת: (see 30:27).

מוֹקֵד: The noun occurs in Isa 10:16. The verb יָקַד occurs in Lev 6:2,5,6; Isa 10:16; 65:5; Jer 15:14; 17:4. In Leviticus, the root refers to the burnt offering. In Ps 102:4, it is used as part of a simile and means "furnace" and this is probably its significance in Isa 33:14.

### Verse 15

צַדִּיקוּת occurs in Isa 33:15; 45:24; Ps 11:7; 103:6. In the last three instances, it is closely associated with Yahweh.

מִישְׁרִים occurs in Isa 26:7; 33:15; 45:19. In 26:7, the path of the righteous is upright. In 45:19 it is Yahweh who speaks what is upright. In Ps 9:9; 17:2; 75:3; 99:4 the word is associated with Yahweh as judge. In Prov 1:3; 2:9, מִישְׁרִים is found with צַדִּיקָה, מִשְׁפָּט as qualities to be desired: the acquisition of these three qualities is the reason why Proverbs was composed (1:3). In Isa 33:15 it is man and not Yahweh with whom the

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1. The verb occurs in Ps 104:32; Dan 10:11; Esra 10:9 and the noun in Ex 15:15; Job 4:14; Ps 2:11; 48:7; 55:6; Isa 33:14.
  2. Ex 15:15; Job 4:14; Ps 48:7; 55:6; Dan 10:11.

word is associated.

מאם: (see 30:12).

בצע: The noun occurs in Isa 33:15; 56:11; 57:17 and refers to unjust gain. Elsewhere the word is used similarly in the context of social justice and is associated with the wicked (1).

עשק: (see 30:12). The plural מעשקות is only found in Isa 33:15 and Prov 28:16 but the plural עשוקים occurs in Job 35:9; Qoh 4:1; Amos 3:9 - always in the context of social justice. In Prov 28:16, מעשקות and בצע occur together as in Isa 33:15.

תמר: The verb occurs in Isa 33:15; 41:10; 42:1. Although it occurs most consistently in Proverbs (2) it also occurs in Psalms and Isaiah where Yahweh upholds the just (3). Apart from Isa 33:15, it does not occur in the context of holding fast to a bribe.

שחר occurs in Isa 1:23; 5:23; 33:15. It features in both the Pentateuch and Wisdom literature. Yahweh himself accepts no bribe (Deut 10:17; 2 Chron 19:7); it is laid down in the law that no one should accept bribes (Ex 23:8; Deut 27:25.); it was this which was the downfall of the sons of Samuel (1 Sam 8:3). In Job (15:34), Proverbs (6:35; 17:8,23; 21:14) and Psalms (26:10) it is a characteristic of the evil and wicked. In Ps 15:5, it

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1. Prov 1:19; 15:27; 28:16; Ps 119:36; Jer 6:13; 8:10; 22:17; Ez 22:13,27; 33:31.
  2. Prov 3:18; 4:4; 5:5,22; 11:16; 28:17; 29:23; 31:19. In Proverbs, one should hold fast to wisdom, 3:18; 4:4; but the violent and evil hold fast to riches 11:16.
  3. Ps 16:5; 41:13; 63:9; Isa 41:10; 42:1.



is an element in the criteria for judging who is worthy to approach Yahweh in Zion – it is this text which is most similar to Isa 33:15.

In Isa 1:23 the accepting of bribes, denoting the absence of justice, is part of the reason for Zion's downfall. In 5:23, the corrupt are condemned in a more general way and not in the context of the justice of Zion.

שָׁטַח is often used to describe a certain type of window (1). It is used of closing one's eyes (Prov 21:13), lips (Prov 17:18) or ears (Ps 58:5; Isa 33:15).

יְדַיִם occurs in Isaiah in 1:15; 4:4; 9:4; 26:21; 33:15; 34:3 (2). The contexts most similar to Isa 33:15 are Prov 29:10; Ps 5:7; 26:9; 55:24; 59:3; 139:19, where the bloodthirsty men are synonymous with the wicked from whom the Psalmist dissociates himself and from whom he prays to be delivered. In 1:15, the hands of the people are full of blood but in the context it primarily refers to the multitude of sacrifices they offer: it may be that it secondarily refers to their lack of social justice.

עָצָם: (see 29:10).

### Verse 16

In the historical books, both the form מִצָּר (3) and מִצְוֶרֶת (4) indicate a stronghold in the literal sense of the word. Sometimes it refers to Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:7,9,1; 1 Chron 11:5,7). In prophetic literature too the

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1. 1 Kgs 6:4; Ez 40:16; 41:16,26.

2. It occurs 16 times in the Pentateuch, 22 times in prophetic literature and 8 times in the Psalms.

3. Judg 6:2; 1 Sam 23:14,19; 24:1; 1 Chron 11:2,7,8,16.

4. 1 Sam 22:4,5; 24:23; 2 Sam 5:7,9,17; 22:2; 23:14; 1 Chron 11:5,16.

words have often a literal sense (Jer 48:41; 51:30; Ez 19:9; 33:27). In Prov 12:12; 9:14, the word is used figuratively to show that wisdom is greater than might and in 2 Sam 22:3; Ps 18:3; 71:3, Yahweh is the stronghold. In Isaiah מצודה occurs in 29:7 and מצר in 33:16. In 29:7 it refers to Zion. In 33:16 it refers to the rocks which are the fortress - but the word סלע also is often used as a metaphor for Yahweh.

שגב: (see 33:5).

מים, לחם: (see 32:6).

נאמן: (see 28:16).

## CONTEXT

V13 is a transitional verse. As Vermeylen [1977: 433] notes, such a summons is more suited to the beginning than to the end of an oracle. אשר עשיתי and גברתי refer to Yahweh's action in v10-12. Those "far off" and "those near" are called upon to hear and learn from v10-12. V13, as a transitional verse, brings together and identifies the עמים and the חטאים of v14. The fate of the peoples in v12 is a sign and warning to the sinners and godless of v14. They are seized with trembling רעה - a word normally associated with the reaction to bad news (1). חטאים, חנפים, may also point to those responsible for the actions in v8. חנפה is found in 24:5 to describe actions very similar to those of v8.

V14a is linked to what goes before, namely the content of v8-12. This is further shown by the fact that the summons to acknowledge the

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1. Ex 15:15; Job 4:14; Ps 48:7; 55:6; Dan 10:11.

power of Yahweh in v14a is lacking in the parallel passages in Ps 15; 24:3-6. But v14b is also linked to what precedes by the phrase **אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת**. V14b differs from Ps 15:1; 24:3; in the latter two instances, one can understand why it is desirable to dwell on the hill of Zion but not, as in Isa 33:14b, why one would want to dwell in everlasting fire (1). Wildberger [1293] smoothes over the difficulty by translating **גֹּר** as "finds protection in". However, it is more probable that the author of 33:14b used the genre of Ps 15; 24:3-6, but adapted it to suit his current preoccupation concerning the punishment of the wicked, picking up the phrase **אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת** from v11.

The phrase **הֵלֶךְ צְדָקוֹת** echoes 30:21 where Yahweh points the way **לְכֹנּוּ בָּהּ**. Righteousness is associated with Yahweh in 32:1 and 33:5 and with Zion in 28:17. **מִישָׁרִים** too is associated with Yahweh in Isa 45:19 and especially with Yahweh as judge (2) but it is also a human quality - Prov 1:3; 2:9 point out that it only comes through wisdom. The righteous man despises (**מֵאֵס**) gain: the verb is normally used for the wicked who despise the things of Yahweh.

**בַּצַּע** too is condemned in Proverbs (1:19; 15:27; 28:16). The link with Proverbs is sustained in that the plural **מַעֲשָׂקוֹת** is found only in Isa 33:15 and Prov 28:16. In Prov 28:16, **מַעֲשָׂקוֹת**, **בַּצַּע** occur together. **מַעֲשָׂקוֹת** does not appear in Ps 15 or 24:3-6: this may indicate wisdom influence. The attitude conveyed in 33:15 contrasts with 30:12 where the people despises (**מֵאֵס**) Yahweh's words and trusts in oppression (**עֲשָׂק**).

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1. Both **אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת** and **מוֹקֵד** are always found in negative contexts.
  2. Ps 9:9; 17:2; 75:3; 99:4.

The righteous man does three things:

- (a) He shakes his hand lest it hold a bribe: the verb נָעַר is the same as that used of Bashan and Carmel in v9. It is the only other instance apart from 52:2 where the word occurs in prophetic literature. The root תָּמַךְ appears most often in Proverbs (8 times) where it is used of the wise who hold fast to wisdom (3:18; 4:4) as opposed to the evil who hold fast to riches (11:16). שָׁחַר too occurs often in wisdom literature (Job 15:34; Prov 6:35; 17:8,23; 21:14; Ps 21:14) where it is a bribe accepted by the wicked. It is found in Ps 15:5 as an element in the criteria for assessing the just man. The image of the just man rejecting a bribe reverses the image in Isa 1:23; 5:23.
- (b) He closes his ears from hearing of bloodshed. סָטַם is only used of closing the ears in Ps 58:5 where it describes the wicked who go astray and stop their ears like a deaf adder and in Prov 17:28 where the wicked man closes his ears to the cry of the poor. Bloodshed is always a characteristic of the evil man (Prov 29:10; Ps 5:7; 26:9; 55:24; 59:3; 139:19) but also a characteristic of the people as a whole in Isa 1:15.
- (c) He shuts his eyes from seeing evil. עָצַם is only found elsewhere in Isa 29:10 where it is used metaphorically of closing the eyes to the understanding of Yahweh's plan. Here the image is reversed: the just man closes his eyes so as not to see evil. In 29:18; 32:3, the eyes and ears of the people will be open to Yahweh: 33:15 may be part of the same theme - they are open to Yahweh but closed to evil.

Similarities between Isa 33:15-16, Ps 15 and Ps 24:3-6

<u>Isa 33</u>	<u>Ps 15</u>	<u>Ps 24:3-6</u>
מי יגור	מי יגור	מי יעלה
הלך צרקות	הלך תמים	
נער כפיו		נקי כפיו

רבר מישרים	רבר אמת
מתמר בשחר	ושחר על-נקי לא לקח
מאס בבצע	נבזה נמאס
מראות ברע	לא עשה רעה

The reward for the just in v16 finds no echo in Ps 15:5 or 24:5. It refers back to v5-6. The just man will dwell on the heights as Yahweh does:

יהוה שכן מרום	מרומים ישכן
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The noun משגב picks up the phrase יהוה נשגב from v5. מצר is often used as a metaphor for Yahweh (2 Sam 22:3; Ps 18:3; 71:3) as is סלע (Ps 31:4; 42:10; 71:5). It is likely that the simile in 32:20 refers to Yahweh also. The certainty of bread and water contrasts with the bread of adversity and the water of affliction in 30:20. נאמן picks up אמנות in v6.

### Isaiah 33: 17-24

## VOCABULARY

### Verse 17

מלך: (see 32:1).

יָפִי: The noun occurs in Isa 3:24; 33:17. It is closely related to the verb יָפָה and the adjective יָפֶה. All three words are most commonly used to denote the beauty of a woman (1). Metaphorically it describes the beauty of Zion (2) Tyre (3), or Egypt (4) personified as a woman. It is

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1. Gen 12:11,14; 29:17; Deut 21:11; 2 Sam 14:27; 1 Kgs 1:3,4; Job 42:15; Prov 6:25; 11:22; 31:30; Ps 45:12; Cant 1:8,15,16; 2:10,13; 4:1,7,10; 5:9; 6:1,4,10; 7:2,7; Esth 1:11; Amos 8:13.
  2. Ps 48:3; 50:3; Isa 3:24; Jer 4:30; Lam 2:15; Ez 16:13,14,15,25.
  3. Ez 27:3,4,11; 28:7,12,17.
  4. Ez 31:7,8.

also applied to men, especially leaders: Joseph in Gen 39:6; Absalom in 2 Sam 14:25; David in 1 Sam.16:12; 17:42; the king in Ps 45:3; Isa 33:17; the prince of Tyre in Ez 28:7; the Pharaoh in Ez 31:2. Isa 33:17 is most similar to Ps 45:3.

חזה: (see 29:10; 30:10). In First Isaiah, with the exception of 26:11, the verb denotes the seeing of a vision (1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 30:10). It occurs twice in ch 33 in v17 and 20. In the context of v17-20, it acts as a simple parallel to the verb ראה.

ארץ: (see 33:9).

מרחקים: (see 33:13). Irwin [154] agrees with Gunkel [179] on the meaning "distant" rather than "broad". He lists parallels where ארץ מרחקים always means a distant land (1). He suggests that it refers to the distant heavenly Zion.

### Verse 18

לבב: (see 32:4).

הגה: (see 31:4).

אימה occurs only once in Isaiah. It occurs most often in Job (2) but is found scattered throughout the OT (3). In ch 33 אימה introduces the thoughts of v18. Elsewhere it often denotes the terror caused by

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1. Prov 25:25; Isa 13:5; 46:11; Jer 4:16; 6:20.
  2. Job 9:34; 13:21; 20:25; 33:7; 39:20; 41:6.
  3. Gen 15:12; Ex 15:16; 23:27; Deut 32:25; Josh 2:9; Prov 20:2; Ps 55:5; 88:16; Esra 3:3; Jer 50:38.

Yahweh against the enemies of Israel (1) but also against Israel herself (Deut 32:25) or against an individual (Ps 55:5; 88:16). In the case of Isa 33:18, Yahweh acts against the enemies of Zion. Irwin [155] translates the word as "awesome sight", reading אִמָּה (from אִם which occurs in Hab 1:7; Cant 6:4,10).

ספר: (see 29:12,18).

שקל occurs in Isa 33:18; 40:12; 46:6; 55:2. The verb is normally used of weighing silver (2) but it is used metaphorically in the sense of "evaluate" in Job 6:2; 31:6. This is the meaning it has in Isa 33:18 where it is parallel to ספר. In Isa 40:12, it is also used metaphorically.

מגורים: (see 30:25).

### Verse 19

נועז is a hapax. It is a niph'al participle. BDB [418] derives it from נעז meaning "barbarous". Wildberger [1310] derives it from עז meaning "to be strong". BHS emends the word to לעז, found only in Ps 114:1. Irwin [157] relates the word to נעז, a by-root of עז.

עמק: (see 31:6). The phrase עמק-שפה also occurs in Ez 3:5,6. It occurs in a context where the people of Israel have hardened their hearts and refuse to hear.

נלעג-לשון: (see 28:11).

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1. Gen 15:12; Ex 15:16; 23:27.

2. Gen 23:16; 2 Sam 14:26; 18:12; 1 Kgs 20:39; Job 28:15; Esth 3:9; 4:7; Ezra 8:25,26,33; Isa 46:6; 55:2; Jer 32:10,19.

Verse 20

קרית: (see 29:1).

מוער: (see הג in 29:1; 30:29). The word occurs in Isa 1:14; 14:13; 33:20. The phrase קרית מוערנו is a title of respect - unlike the connotation attached to 1:14 and 29:1.

נוה שאנן: (see 32:18).

צען is a hapax.

אהל בל יצען offers a parallel to מוערנו in that both words denote the idea of something fixed and permanent.

The word אהל occurs in Isa 16:5; 33:20; 38:12; 40:22; 54:2. In 16:5, the tent of David represents security and good rule. In Isa 54:2, the tent of Israel is enlarged to cope with the influx of people. In view of the parallel with מוערנו, it is worth noting that the phrase מוער אהל, found throughout the Pentateuch, represents the presence of Yahweh. The text in 33:20, which acts as a metaphor, may also evoke the presence of Yahweh in Zion.

יתרה: The noun, meaning "tent-peg", occurs most often in the Pentateuch where, with the exception of Deut 23:14, it always refers to



the tent-peg of the Tabernacle (1). In Isa 33:20, it occurs as part of the metaphor of the tent which is Jerusalem. יִתְּרָה is used by itself as a metaphor for Eliakim in 22:23 to evoke the permanency of his reign - a metaphor which is reversed by the addition of v25 where the peg is loosened. In 54:2, it occurs with אֶהָל.

לִנְצַח: (see 28:28).

נָסַע occurs particularly in the Pentateuch with the sense of setting off or to move camp (Num 2:17; 10:18; 22:25). In prophetic literature, its use is restricted to Isa 33:20; 37:8,37; 38:12; Jer 4:7; 31:24; but only in Isa 33:20 is it used of a tent. In Isa 38:12, Hezekiah complains that his dwelling has been removed.

חֶבֶל: Although חֶבֶל can mean "cord" (Ps 18:5; 116:3), it does not refer specifically to the cords of a tent and is never found parallel to יִתְּרָה as in 33:20. In v23, its feminine suffix refers to Jerusalem.

נָתַק: The verb is used frequently of "snapping" cords or bands (2). In Isa 22:24, it is used as part of the image of the tent-peg to which Eliakim is compared. In 10:20, Jeremiah complains that his tent has been destroyed and all his cords broken - an image of the destruction of Jerusalem and one which Isa 33:20 overturns.

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1. Ex 27:19; 35:18; 38:20,31; 39:40; Num 3:37; 4:32.

2. Judg 16:9,12; Qoh 4:12; Ps 2:3; 107:14; Isa 5:27 (sandal-thong); Jer 2:20; 5:5; 30:8.

Verse 21

אֲרִיר often refers to leaders, nobles or kings (1), or to majestic trees (2). In the Psalms, it is used of the majesty of Yahweh (3). It is to the use of the word in the Psalms that Isa 33:21 is most similar.

נָהָר: In First Isaiah (with the exception of 33:21) נָהָר is used to indicate a specific river (4). In Isa 33:21 it is used as a metaphor for Yahweh - similar to the use of the word in Second Isaiah where Yahweh has control over the river. He can make the rivers dry up (42:5; 44:27; 50:2); he can render it harmless (43:2); he can turn the deserts into rivers (41:18; 43:19,20); he will come like a rushing river (59:19); he will extend prosperity to Jerusalem like a river (66:12). Therefore in Isa 33:21, נָהָר anticipates the associations of the word in Second Isaiah.

יְאֵרִים: Apart from 33:21, the word in First Isaiah always indicates a specific river, normally the Nile (7:18; 19:6,7,8; 23:3,10; 37:25) (5)

רָחֲבֵי-יָרִים: The phrase occurs in Isa 22:18 and 33:21 (6). It normally describes the vastness of the land (Gen 34:21; Judg 18:10; 1 Chron 4:40; Isa 22:18), the sea (Ps 104:23) or Jerusalem (Neh 7:4).

אֲנִי-שֵׁט: The noun אֲנִי occurs in Isa 2:16; 23:1,14; 33:21; 43:14; 60:9 but שֵׁט occurs only in Isa 28:15 and 33:21. שׁוּט occurs in Isa 10:26; 28:15,18

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1. Judg 5:25; 2 Chron 23:20; Ps 136:18; Jer 14:3; 25:34,35,36; 30:21; Ez 32:18; Nah 3:18; Neh 3:5; 10:30.
  2. Isa 10:34; Ez 17:23.
  3. Ps 8:2,10; 76:5; 93:4; 136:18; also Ex 15:10.
  4. Isa 7:20; 8:7; 11:15; 18:1,2,7; 19:5,6; 27:12.
  5. This is also the case elsewhere: Ex 7 (10 times); Ps 78:44; Jer 46:7; Ez 29 (5 times); Hos 9:5.
  6. Gen 34:21; Judg 18:10; 1 Chron 4:40; Neh 7:4; Ps 104:25.

and משוט with the meaning "oar" in Ez 27:6,29.

צִי-אֲרִיר: The word צִי occurs in Num 24:24; Isa 33:21; Ez 30:9; Dan 11:30. The image of ships to represent an enemy is quite rare in the OT. Normally אֲנִי occurs in a context of prosperity and commerce for Israel (e.g. 1 Kgs 9:26,27; 10:11,12; 22:49,50.): but Yahweh opposes the ships of Tarshish in Ps 48:8 and the fleet of Tyre in Ez 27:9,25,29 constitutes a threat. Clements [1980a: 270], in an effort to explain the image, suggests that it refers to Babylon, a city famous for its waterways or to the traditional mythological symbolism associated with Gihon.

### Verse 22

שֹׁפֵט: In First Isaiah Yahweh judges the nations (2:4); the anointed of Yahweh judges justly (11:4; 16:5). In Second Isaiah Yahweh judges the peoples (51:5) and with fire (66:16); but it is in the Psalms where the theme of Yahweh as judge is most recurrent (1).

מַחֲקֵקוּ: (see 30:8). The verb חֲקַק is used of princes ruling in Prov 8:15 where it is parallel to מֶלֶךְ. Prov 8:15 has many similarities with Isa 32:1.

מֶלֶךְ: (see 32:1).

יֹשִׁיעֵנוּ: (see 30:15).

### Verse 23

נָטַשׁ: (see 32:14).

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1. Ps 7:9,12; 9:5,9; 10:18; 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 50:6; 58:2; 67:5; 72:4; 75:3,8; 82:1,2,3,8; 94:2; 96:13; 98:9; 109:31.

תרנם: The root occurs only in Isa 30:17; 33:27; Ez 27:5.

נס: (see 30:17; 31:90). The noun appears with תרן in Ez 27:5,7, in the context of the building of the ships of Tyre.

חלק: The verb occurs in Isa 9:2; 34:17; 53:12. It occurs with שלל in 9:2.

שלל: (see 33:4).

פסחים occurs only in Isaiah in 33:23; 35:6.

בז occurs in Isaiah in 8:1; 10:6; 11:14; 17:14; 24:3; 33:23; 42:22. It occurs with חלק in 8:1; 10:6; 17:14; 33:23.

In 8:1; 10:6, it is Assyria who spoils and plunders. Isa 17:14, which Childs [1967:129] identified as the *summary-appraisal* form, refers to the fate of the nations who spoil and plunder. The addition of v14b in ch 17 and the addition of v23b in ch 33 may have a common purpose. The function of v23b may be to add a final conclusion in the light of v18-19 where the prey and spoil are divided: it is the final act of victory.

### Verse 24

חלה occurs in Isa 1:5; 14:10; 17:11; 33:24; 38:9; 53:3,5,10. That Israel is sick and full of pain is attributed to the fact that she has rebelled against Yahweh (1:5) and forgotten the God of her salvation (17:11): but in its turn Babylon, too, will become weak and sick (14:10). Isa 33:24 reverses 1:5 - now that Israel has been forgiven her iniquity, she is no longer sick.

העם הישב: (see 30:19).

נשן: (see 30:6).

ען: (see 30:13).

## CONTEXT

V17-24 are loosely united in that the addressee is in the second person singular (v17,18,19,20,23). This pattern is broken by the first person plural in v21-22. Who is the addressee? Is it the just man in v15-16 and does v17f continue, in a different vein, his reward introduced in v16? That the king is Yahweh is easy to ascertain: the image of the king has already been anticipated in v5-6, v10, 32:1 and recurs in v22. The phrase "your eyes will see your teacher" in 30:20 finds an echo here. "The king in beauty" is parallel to the "distant land" - a fertile image contrasting with the barrenness of the land in v9.

The verb יהגה , only found in Job, Proverbs, Psalms and Isaiah, has not its normal meaning in Isaiah where it denotes the sound of an animal (31:4; 38:14; 59:11). It has the meaning "to contemplate" as in Ps 1:2; 63:7; 77:13; 143:5. The phrase לבך יהגה is part of the sequence "your eyes shall see" in v17 and v20; but it introduces two parallel phrases each beginning with איה and is related to the theme in v19. V17-18 refer back (if not specifically to Assyria) to the external enemy of v1.

Is the phrase לבך יהגה אימה an instructional technique to show that

it is Yahweh who has brought about the destruction of the enemy? (1). **אימה** occurs in First Isaiah only here but **מגדלים** occurs in 2:15; 30:25 where Yahweh is responsible for destroying the towers of the enemy. The external enemy in v18 is identified with the enemy in 28:11 where he is the instrument of Yahweh. **נלעג לשון** occurs in both verses: the parallel phrase **עמקי שפה** occurs in Ez 3:5,6 and in Ps 114:1. So v18 and 19 express the final and permanent removal of the enemy of v1 - a theme reinforced by the glossator who added v23b.

In v20, Zion and Jerusalem are parallel as are their epithets: Zion is called **קריית מועדנו** and Jerusalem **נוה שאנן**. The first phrase recalls 29:1 and the second recalls 32:18. The image of the tent may refer to the **אהל-מועד**. The vocabulary of v20 suggests permanency.

V21 introduces the metaphor of Yahweh as a place of broad rivers and streams; a theme more in keeping with Second Isaiah where he has control over the rivers and where he comes like a rushing river in 59:19. In 30:25, brooks will run with water in the time of salvation. This may have the effect of reversing the image of Yahweh using destructive waters in 28:2,17 (**שיט** is found only in 28:15 and 33:21). As Clements [1980a: 270] suggests, the verse may refer to the mythological symbolism associated with the spring of Gihon.

V22 is a *reprise* of v5 and is a fitting conclusion to the chapter. In v5 Yahweh will fill Zion with justice and righteousness - a promise that is fulfilled by destroying the evil in Zion (v8-14) and rewarding the righteous (v15-20). Now that this has been done, Yahweh is ruler - the

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1. **אימה** is found most often in Job.

three words מלך, מחקק, שפט emphasize this aspect.

V23-24 are three later additions to the chapter:

- (a) V23a modifies the permanency of the previous images. חבל picks up the image of the tent in v20 and תרנם, נס (words taken perhaps from 30:17) pick up the image of the galley. The verb נטש, as in 32:14, gives the idea of instability. It could refer to the instability of Zion but is more likely to refer to the weak position of the enemy.
- (b) V23b picks up and develops v4. חלק, שלל are found in 9:2 and represent the last stage in the defeat of the enemy. The lame פסחים, as in 35:6, (the only two occurrences of the verb פסח in Isaiah) also share in the victory. This denotes the utter destruction of the enemy. The addition in v23b may be compared to the addition of 17:14b where בז, חלק occur. Childs's summary appraisal form [1967: 128-29] begins with זה and v23b begins with a similar adverb אז.
- (c) V24 spiritualizes the material victory of v23b. The verb חלה in Isaiah is used of spiritual illness in 1:5; 17:11. The fact that the people who dwell in Jerusalem are forgiven their guilt is more important to the glossator than a material victory over the enemy.

## Chapter 8

### WISDOM INFLUENCE IN FIRST ISAIAH



## Chapter 8

WISDOM INFLUENCE IN ISAIAH 28-33

The presence of wisdom vocabulary בֵּין, יָדַע, יָרָה, חָכָם, חֵכְמָה, יָעַץ, the central position of the parable of the farmer in 28:23-29 which begins with the *Lehreröffnungsformel* and concludes with the *summary-appraisal* form and the important role played by Yahweh as instructor and teacher (28:9; 30:9,20) call for an evaluation of the wisdom influence evident in these chapters.

Over the years, the problem of what constitutes wisdom or wisdom traditions has often been debated but with little consensus, as can be seen from Sheppard's synopsis of the historical debate [1980: 1-12]. Does the term חֵכְמָה denote specifically literary forms and genres, does it refer to a social movement, a secular stance on life or merely the presence of intellectual traditions in Israel? The lack of consensus is reflected in the spectrum of scholarly opinion: from those who interpret wisdom narrowly, such as McKane [1965: 53] who defined wisdom in its earlier manifestations as

"primarily a disciplined empiricism engaged with the problems of government and administration"

to those who defined it in a more general way, such as McKenzie [1967: 5] who included even the historical books under the umbrella of wisdom and argued that wisemen were

"simply convinced of experience and knew that wisdom arose from reflection on experience."

Von Rad [1965: 418-59] represents best a position between McKane and McKenzie. He saw in wisdom a gradual development from old wisdom to theological wisdom and finally to apocalyptic wisdom. Old wisdom in the pre-exilic stage consisted of observing empirical and gnomic data. In the exilic and post-exilic eras, wisdom became theological in that it began to fill those gaps left vacant by empirical knowledge. Later in apocalyptic wisdom, the scribal wisemen reduced their perception of reality to a simplified and deterministic pattern.

The origins of wisdom and its *Sitz im Leben* are not agreed upon either. McKane [54] sees its origins in the training of diplomats while Gerstenberger [1965: 38] locates wisdom in the family ethos as rules for social conduct. Whybray [1974: 75] sees wisdom as

"general intellectual traditions permeating every dimension of Israel's social strata."

The problem increases when one tries to identify wisdom traditions and to determine their function in the non-wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The vagueness of the term חכמה and the different applications of the concept constitute a major problem. Von Rad's study [1965: 281-300] of the Joseph story in Genesis was criticized by Crenshaw [1969: 136] on the grounds that the support mounted to confirm his position was eclectic and circumstantial and that the theological elements in the narrative far exceeded von Rad's own definition of wisdom. The method employed by Whybray [1968: 96-116] in his study of the succession narrative and by Talmon [1963: 426-27] in his investigation of the Book of Esther have been criticized by Sheppard [1980: 9] on the grounds that it is very difficult to argue for a specialized literary genre of the political novel that primarily teaches

wisdom as separate and distinct from the general tendency of ancient literature which depicts characters stereotypically in wise and foolish activity. It is one thing to recognize vocabulary, literary genres and forms which have parallels in the Wisdom books, particularly Job and Proverbs: it is quite another to determine their function within the OT book in which they occur: this is especially true of the book of Isaiah.

The first systematic study of wisdom vocabulary in First Isaiah was carried out by Fichtner [1949: 75-80]. He took as typical wisdom vocabulary the verbs יָדַע, חָכַם, בִּין, יָעַץ, their derivatives and the noun תּוֹשִׁיָּה. From his survey of this vocabulary, Fichtner drew attention to two groups of texts: the first showed how Isaiah often condemned the wise men of Israel, while the second group illustrated similarities with wisdom literature.

In the first group, Fichtner lists Isaiah's condemnation of "those wise in their own eyes" (5:3), all those including "the counsellor" whom Yahweh is taking away (3:1-3); those who rely upon the wisdom of Egypt (30:1; 31:1) because they know well, from 10:13 which condemns the wisdom of the king of Assyria, that earthly wisdom is inferior.

In the second group of texts, Fichtner finds many similarities with Wisdom literature. Apart from the wisdom literary genres of the parable of the vineyard (5:1-7) and of the farmer (28:23-29), he draws several parallels between the vocabulary of Isaiah and that of the Proverbs of "the men of \_\_\_\_\_" in Proverbs 25-30:

Hezekiah

<u>Isaiah</u>	<u>Proverbs</u>
1:21-26	25:4, 26:23
3:9	28:21, 24:23
5:21	26:5,12,16, 28:11
9:5-6, 11:4	29:14
19:14	26:11
29:13	26:23

Fichtner concluded that there is a basic ambivalence towards wisdom on the part of Isaiah. On the one hand he condemns the wise men of Israel, the wisdom of Egypt and Assyria, while on the other his vocabulary and thought seem to be quite similar to that found in wisdom literature. He resolved this ambiguity quite simply: before his call in ch 6, Isaiah had been a wise man but after his call he became a prophet. This change is seen in the commissioning of Isaiah in 6:9-10 where the verbs בין, ידע are used to denote that Isaiah's wisdom role is to cease forthwith.

The shortcomings of Fichtner's article are self-evident. The fact that Isaiah used wisdom language does not prove that he had once been a professional sage and secondly a mere listing of wisdom elements does not throw light on Isaiah's purpose and motives in using different wisdom genres.

In a second article [1951: 16-33] still considered the seminal study of

the verb  $\text{רָצַח}$  (1), Fichtner explores the plan of Yahweh in the teaching of Isaiah. He suggests [18] that  $\text{רָצַח}$  can mean either "to advise or counsel" or "to plan": he felt that these meanings are related in that the counsellor through his advice suggests a plan and calls for a special resolve or resolution. His basic thesis is that Yahweh's plan primarily involved a divine judgment for Israel and the nations: although it was announced by Isaiah to his people, they refused to take his message seriously (5:12,19) despite the impact of the initial effect of the plan in 5:12; 9:7f; 22:11. The plan or work of Yahweh was characterized as "strange" "alien" (28:21) and "marvellous" "wonderful" (29:14) and involved not only Israel but embraced the whole earth (14:26; 28:22) especially Assyria which played the crucial role of Yahweh's instrument of judgment (16:5f). Any rival plan, whether Judah's (29:15-16; 30:1f) or Assyria's (10:7,13-14) or any other nation's (7:5; 8:9-10; 19:1) was doomed to failure. The marvellous plan of Yahweh would invalidate any human wisdom or plan but it also entailed salvation, particularly the hope of a messianic ruler (9:5; 11:2).

In his article, Fichtner does not look for connections between the use of verb  $\text{רָצַח}$  in Isaiah and its use in wisdom literature: such a survey was carried by Jensen [1986: 451-53]. He reports that in Proverbs, human counsel ( $\text{הַצָּלָח}$ ) is presented as a positive path to wisdom and peace (12:15,20; 13:10; 19:20) while at the same time the book affirms the priority that Yahweh's  $\text{הַצָּלָח}$  takes over anything planned by humans. Whereas in Proverbs this  $\text{הַצָּלָח}$  is hidden, in Isaiah it is perceived that his

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1. The frequency of the root  $\text{רָצַח}$  in Isaiah can be seen from Stähli's survey [748-52] in the OT. Out of a total of 175 occurrences of the root in the OT, 35 are found in Isaiah as opposed to only 17 in Proverbs or 3 in the large prophetic book of Ezekiel.

plans are well known (45:2). In Job, Yahweh possesses חָכָמָה among his other attributes (12:13) but causes the plans of the cunning to fail (5:13). In Job 18:7, the wicked is cast down by his own counsel. Jensen concludes [455] that in Isaiah Yahweh is able to undo the plans of all others often because they are wicked and evil but Yahweh's plan will always be accomplished.

The importance of Fichtner's two articles is shown by the fact that twenty years later in 1971, Whedbee takes up and analyzes his articles in the light of the results of the scholarship of the intervening years. In his introduction [16], Whedbee emphasizes the complexity of the wisdom traditions and warns that law, prophecy and wisdom can no longer be treated as self-contained, isolated categories but are inter-related in various ways in the history of Israelite society.

Whedbee [25] faces the same difficulty in defining what he means by wisdom traditions. He states that

"If the speech (of Isaiah) contains terms and themes indigenous to wisdom, it is appropriately called wisdom in origin. In short, if a definite wisdom orientation can be shown to be a constitutive feature of the speech, it is a safe bet that the prophet is employing wisdom materials."

He argues for a close link between Isaiah the prophet and court wisdom circles. His views can be briefly summarized: firstly, he sees 1:2-3; 5:1-7; 28:23-29 as parables and includes 10:15; 29:16 in the same group because of their affinity with parabolic speech. In 1:2-3, he views the father-son analogy as a wisdom characteristic (Prov 4:1; 5:1; 6:20) as is the theme of the ox and ass (Prov 7:22-23; 26:3). He argues that Isaiah is stating here in wisdom language that Israel's stupidity can be

seen in her lack of knowledge. He plays down the part that v2-3 play in the 2'7 pattern which v1-8 is generally recognized to be [Wright 1962: 26-67, Harvey 1967: 36] and which appeals to the covenantal agreement made between Yahweh and his people. Wildberger [19] supporting Whedbee, argues that there is no sharp contrast between the wisdom ideal which is insightful, knowledgeable conduct and the demand for loyalty within the Yahweh-Israel covenantal relationship.

Whedbee [43-51] argues that in the parable of the vineyard (5:1-7), Isaiah uses the same technique as the wisemen. He draws from the experience of man and nature to get across a forceful and foreboding message: examples of such a technique in wisdom literature are Prov 25:14; 26:11; Ps 1:3-4; Sir 11:2-3; 14:19; 27:6.

Whedbee [54] describes the parable of the farmer (28:23-29) as a typical wisdom *mashal* whose context, speech, form and general didactic tone betray its solid wisdom roots. The central theme that the farmer's skill stems from a divine teacher is wisdom in orientation. The introductory formula in v23, the *Lehreröffnungsformel* occurs frequently in wisdom literature to introduce a lesson, e.g. Job 33:1,33; Prov 4:1; 7:24. Whedbee [64] suggests that the unit v23-29 comes from the Assyrian crisis of 701: it is a disputation speech and is a prognosis for the future and a call for decision. Isaiah forces his sceptical opponents to decide whether or not Yahweh can be counted upon to act wisely and hence be trusted.

In two further texts, Whedbee [68] notes an ironic twist: 10:15 which concludes 10:5-15 is one of the most powerful speeches in Isaiah: in it the wisdom saying is the climax of the the argument and exposes the

ridiculousness of Assyria's claims. Its wisdom background is evident both from its form and method of argument. In the second text, 29:15-16, the function of the double rhetorical question in 29:15-16 serves to show the absurdity of the position of v15.

Whedbee [54] draws support from Childs's *summary-appraisal* in 14:26; 17:14b; 28:29 [Childs 1967: 128-36] to attribute wisdom techniques to Isaiah. According to Childs, this form consists of a demonstrative pronoun הַזֶּה or הַלְכֵּי which introduces a summary and generalized appraisal of a unit of material which normally comes at the end of the unit. The form has a reflective, didactic tone, often containing technical wisdom language and is common in OT wisdom literature, e.g. Prov 1:19:

"Such are the ways of all who get gain by violence;  
it takes away the life of its possessors."

Job 20:29 is another example:

"This is the portion of a wicked man;  
the heritage decreed for him by God."

Qoheleth provides the best example of the form in 2:26:

"This also is vanity and a striving after wind."

According to Childs and Whedbee, the three examples of the form found in Isaiah stem from the prophet and show his dependence on wisdom traditions. Barth [113, 180-83, 228-30] however, attributes all three texts to the AR and Sheppard [1980: 209] makes much of the form as an AR technique used in their large-scale rearrangement of material to re-interpret Isaiah's oracles and to lend authoritative weight to this



re-interpretation.

Whedbee [73] picks up the argument of Gerstenberger [1962: 249-63] who suggested that the prophetic woe oracle, which can be separated from a lament for the dead, had its origin in wisdom - in the wisemen's reflections about the conditions of the world. The social concerns of many of Isaiah's oracles are attributed by Gerstenberger to their roots in popular ethos. Concerns with the poor, with property, with drunkenness in Isa 5:8,22-23; 10:1-2 are echoed in Prov 14:31; 17:15,16; 18:5; 22:22. Whedbee disagrees with Gerstenberger in that a strict distinction cannot be made between popular ethos and law since both go back essentially to the same roots.

Finally, Whedbee [126-48] suggests an explanation for Isaiah's employment of wisdom forms and vocabulary. He disagrees with McKane's strongly contrasted roles of sage and prophet and suggests that the wise man not only dealt with empirical data but also realized that the whole world order was part of a plan of God - a plan which was always a limiting factor in the wiseman's deliberations. Whedbee [126] argues, on the basis of the Joseph story and the Succession Narrative, that the idea of a world order sustained by God was current in the circles of the royal court in Jerusalem. The wisemen in the Jerusalem court possessed in their own traditions the recognition of a divine plan which took priority over any human plan or counsel. Isaiah used wisdom traditions and wisdom vocabulary to condemn the wisemen for forgetting the plan of God which they had in their own traditions and for forgetting the limits of their own empirical wisdom. In other words, Isaiah employed technical wisdom vocabulary, used by the sages at court who obviously had influence in political matters, to remind them

of the place of the plan of God in their own traditions and of the subordinate place occupied by the plans and wisdom of man.

Whedbee's approach suffers from the disadvantage that he limits his inquiry to *authentic* Isaian material. Wisdom vocabulary in secondary material such as 32:1-8 is not discussed. Indeed not all scholars are convinced that the passages that he does deal with in detail are from the prophet e.g. 1:2-3; 5:1-7; 28:23-29. Yet this approach has continued in subsequent study such as the inquiry into the significance of the word תורה by Jensen [1973] and in other articles [1979, 1981, 1986] on wisdom influence in First Isaiah. He focuses upon the use Isaiah made of wisdom traditions referring only to *authentic* Isaian material.

In 1979 Vermeylen [1979: 39-58] opened up a new approach to the debate. Rather than try to discover the possible links between Isaiah and the sages, Vermeylen looked at the interest in wisdom reflected not only in the *authentic* Isaian material but also in each layer of redaction within First Isaiah. This approach has certain advantages. It does not dismiss as totally insignificant wisdom vocabulary or themes which appear in non-Isaianic material. It leaves open the possibility that perhaps later editors of the book had as much interest in wisdom traditions as Isaiah had. Since it is often difficult to determine *authentic* Isaian material, it is better to relegate a text to a later redaction where it can be discussed than to dismiss it as non-Isaian in which case it is not brought into the debate at all.

The disadvantages are that this approach can be largely subjective depending on how one views the various stages in the editorial process of First Isaiah. The search to find a pattern which indicates a deliberate

interest in wisdom traditions by later redactors can be very elusive, exemplified in the case of Vermeylen and Barth.

Vermeylen, too, has difficulty with the definition of wisdom. By wisdom traditions he means [41] the use of the word  $\text{לֵב}$ , vocabulary and themes that occur frequently in Job and Proverbs and the use of associated literary genres. He bases his analysis on his earlier approach [1977] used in distinguishing the different layers of redaction within Isaiah.

Vermeylen [1979: 41-42], against Whedbee, does not agree with Gerstenberger that the prophetic woe oracles had their origin in wisdom usage. Indeed, according to Vermeylen, Isaiah himself was little influenced by wisdom. His condemnations were generally direct and specific and did not have the general and universal tone of a wisdom aphorism. Isaiah uses the verb  $\text{לֵב}$  or noun  $\text{לֵב}$  only six times: 3:1-3; 5:19; 7:5; 14:24; 29:15; 30:1. No particular significance should be attached to Isaiah's use of this term since in all 6 texts, the prophet is addressing wise men, counsellors, in language that they will understand. What would have been surprising is if Isaiah had used vocabulary other than that of wisdom to express his criticism.

Towards the end of the seventh century, the collection of Isaiah's oracles was completed in the light of the ancient belief in the absolute inviolability of Jerusalem [1979:45-48]. To this redaction belong 8:10; 14:26; 23:9 where the verb  $\text{לֵב}$  occurs. Vermeylen attaches no particular significance to this. The redactors simply borrowed the motif from the texts upon which they were commenting so that 8:10 is taken from 7:5, 14:26 is taken from 14:24 and 23:9 is taken from 23:8. To the same level

of redaction belong the two messianic poems 9:1-6a and 11:1-5. These poems have links with royal wisdom traditions and contain many terms characteristic of wisdom: both poems have phrases which can be compared to the language of Prov 14:27,33; 16:10,12,13,16; 20:26; 21:30; 29:4,14. Vermeylen concludes from this that there is an undeniable link between the authors of 9:1-6a; 11:1-5 and the "intellectual milieu of the Jerusalem court".

During the exile, the various collections of Isaian oracles were gathered together into a single work by several redactors belonging to the Deuteronomic school [1979: 48-53]. Points of contact between these redactors and wisdom circles are rare and insignificant. To this layer of redaction belong 1:3; 1:21-26; 5:1-7; 19:1-4,10-15. Vermeylen believes that 1:3 has no links with wisdom literature: the presence of the verbs  $\text{עָרַב}$  and  $\text{בָּרַךְ}$  is not weighty evidence in favour of this. He looks at the verse in the light of Deuteronomic concerns with fidelity to the covenant: 1:3 suggests the deliberate refusal of Israel to be faithful to the covenant.

With regard to 1:21-26: although Fichtner [1949: 76] pointed out the resemblance between this unit and Prov 25:4f, Vermeylen [1979: 49] sees the connection as a very indirect one and would associate 1:21-26 with Jer 6:27-30. He argues, against Fichtner and Whedbee, that 5:1-7 is not an indication of wisdom influence on the prophet. The unit is more juridical than sapiential and emanates from the Deuteronomic school and has no connection with wisdom.

Isa 19:1-4, 10-15 also belong to a redactor influenced by Deuteronomic theology and not by wisdom traditions. The pericope is

entirely constituted from previous verses of the book which Vermeylen [52] lists:

- v2 is taken from 3:5.
- v3 from various verses 3:2-3; 8:19; - 30:1; 31:3.
- v4 is taken from 3:4.
- v13-14 are taken from 28:7-9; 29:9; 31:3.
- v15 is taken from 9:13.
- v11-12 are made up of words and phrases taken from 5:21; 14:24-26; 29:14; 30:4.

Vermeylen [53] concludes that the section 19:1-4, 10-15 is too composite to have any intentional links with wisdom traditions.

In post-exilic times, First Isaiah underwent several redactions [1979: 53-57]. The second of these redactions reflects the preoccupations of the pious Jews gathered around the Temple in Jerusalem in the second half of the fifth century, conscious of their efforts to be faithful yet disoriented by the delay in their deliverance. In this redaction the links with the wisdom traditions are very clear. Several additions insist on the happiness which knowledge (11:9, 33:6b) and the fear of יהוה (11:3a, 33:6b) bestow. It is to this redaction that the parable of the farmer (28:23-29) belongs. The formulae and the vocabulary are very similar to those in wisdom literature, e.g. Prov 4:1; 6:27,28; 7:24. The point of this poem was to stress the importance of understanding that there is a mysterious divine order in the ordinary events of life.

Another theme in the post-exilic redaction was the distinction drawn between the good and the evil and their respective rewards, e.g. Isa 3:10-11 can be compared with Ps 1 which has a wisdom background. Isa 3:10-11 is similar to Prov 11:21 and 12:21. The clear distinctions

drawn in Isa 32:6-8 reflect Prov 11:9; 17:7,21,26; 19:6. To the post-exilic redaction also, belongs Isa 14:27 which is a commentary on the preceding verse. It is similar to Job 9:12; 11:10; 23:13. Is 25:1 which contains "the marvellous plans" and 31:2 which comments upon the wisdom of God belong to this stage of redaction.

Vermeylen concludes [57-59] that the closest contacts between First Isaiah and wisdom literature take place at the level of the post-exilic redaction(s). The most important parallels are found in the Book of Job but also in Psalms and in the Proverbs of Solomon (Prov 10:1-22:16). Apart from the post-exilic redactor(s), the pre-exilic (Josianic) redaction is the only other stage where an interest is found in the wisdom traditions. This interest finds expression in the messianic poems 9:1-6a and 11:1-5.

Barth does not deal specifically with wisdom influence in First Isaiah, but if one traces the occurrences of those verses containing בִּינָה, יָדַע, חָכָם, יָעַץ, as well as the other texts current in the Isaiah/Wisdom debate, through Barth's analysis [311-36] it is clear that the majority of these verses come from the pre-exilic period:

- (a) the following verses come from Isaiah himself or from a time very soon afterwards: 3:3; 5:13,19,21; 6:9-10; 7:5; 10:13; 11:2; 28:9.
- (b) the following come from the AR: 8:10; 9:5; 14:24-26; 28:23-29; 32:3-4.
- (c) a few additions are from the late exilic and post-exilic period: 1:3,26; 11:9; 19:11-15; 23:8-9; 33:6.

According to Barth's theory, therefore, the use of wisdom motifs (knowing, understanding, human and divine plans) is found in the way the AR editors arranged previous material and in their additions to this material. Unlike Vermeylen's analysis, any preoccupations with wisdom traditions in First Isaiah date from the Josianic and not the post-exilic period - a view which has led Sheppard [1985: 209] to situate the AR among the sapiential schools of the Josianic period.

A fresh approach to the function of wisdom in the OT was suggested by Sheppard [1980] who, from a canonical critical standpoint, argues that at a certain period in the development of OT literature, wisdom became a theological category associated with an understanding of canon which formed a perspective to interpret Torah and prophetic traditions. Unlike Fichtner, Whedbee, Jensen and Vermeylen and Cañellas' recent reappraisal of the problem, Sheppard approaches the concept of wisdom not from the earliest period and working forward but begins his study with Sirach and Baruch in the later Hellenistic period. He thus immediately places a control over the problem of historical development of wisdom.

In his study of Sirach [1980: 19-72], Sheppard argues that Sirach is aware of the Torah and the prophets as precise canonical collections, while wisdom or the way of wisdom is seen only as an intellectual concept within the context of Scripture. Nevertheless, Sirach models his book on the Book of Proverbs in order to produce his own book of "wise instruction and apt proverbs" (50:27). Sheppard carries out a detailed study of Sirach 24 [19-21] and Baruch 3:9-4:4 [84-85] and examines several literary techniques by which non-wisdom traditions of the Torah have been <sup>made to</sup> conform<sub>a</sub> to teach wisdom like that of the biblical wisdom

tradition. He concludes that in the Hellenistic period, there was a strict distinction between the Torah and wisdom as an intellectual concept: wisdom still lacked a full literary canonical definition on a par with the Torah. Explicit identification of the Torah with wisdom made by Sirach and Baruch support the claim that the post-exilic wisdom traditions derive their chief authority from the fixed Torah.

The post-exilic wisdom traditions are depicted as being in direct continuity with the Book of Proverbs in particular, but also with Qoheleth and Job. The continuity between the biblical and post-exilic tradition is marked by the borrowing of distinctive language and imitation of literary styles from the Book of Proverbs.

Sheppard suggests [100] that just as distinct themes and phrases from familiar canonical books were incorporated redactionally into the interpretative context of Sirach and Baruch, in the same way earlier biblical redactors provided a theological assessment of fixed traditions by means of editorial arrangement and addendum.

He does not discuss the influence of wisdom traditions on First Isaiah but applies his method to the concluding verse of the Book of Hosea, 14:10 [129-36]. This verse comes as a surprise because it provides a remarkable exception to the lack of wisdom orientation within the book as a whole. Since the last verse, reminiscent of the sayings within Proverbs and Qoheleth, is generally recognized as summarizing the contents of the book, the question arises as to how and why the contents of a fundamentally prophetic book, which offers virtually no internal evidence of wisdom influence, can be summarized by a didactic proverb, typical of wisdom literature. The verse is obviously



redactional: it is a secondary editorial appendage to the already appropriate ending of the book in v9. The author of this redactional verse seems to see in the book of Hosea a witness to the ways of Yahweh which the wise man may interpret as a guide for the righteous life. The proverb displays a learned play on a particular complex of words (כשע, הלך, פשע, כשל) used throughout the book. The conclusion effects the interpretation of the entire book. The purpose of the addition is to generalize the original particularity of address: in other words, a collection which once applied only to the Northern Kingdom was extended to include the Southern Kingdom but now applies to everyone. The reader is offered a timeless axiom and the teachings of Hosea are extended to individuals – they now apply to the righteous of every generation who venture upon the paths of Yahweh. The process is artfully constructed from wisdom literature to link it closely to the ideals of biblical wisdom.

The approach of Sheppard is helpful in assessing wisdom influence in First Isaiah for two reasons. Firstly, it stresses the *function* that wisdom ideas play in evaluating the content of a particular passage as opposed to merely identifying *forms* and vocabulary reminiscent of wisdom literature. Secondly it deals with the present form of the text and so evaluates more comprehensively the role of wisdom in the literary sphere and not merely with possible links between the prophet and wisdom circles.

If Sheppard's interest in applying *canon criticism* is left aside (1), his emphasis on wisdom themes used to interpret a corpus of material may be adapted and applied within the context of Isa 28-33. It is the sustained emphasis on the wisdom of Yahweh that unifies and interprets the material within these chapters in the consistent perspective of Yahweh's wise plan. The emphasis on Yahweh's wisdom holds together various related themes: firstly, listening to the words of Yahweh as teacher and instructor brings security and peace (Isa 28:12,16; 29:18,24; 30:15,18,20f). The tension between destruction and deliverance is evidence of the conditional nature of salvation and so instruction is offered even to the wicked (29:24; 32:3-4) that they may improve their ways. The plan of Yahweh is superior to the plan of men (28:21; 29:14). The parable of the farmer (28:23-29:) may emphasize that it is in all justice that Yahweh's wise actions are carried out. The function of the wisdom vocabulary and techniques (e.g. the *Lehreröffnungsformel* in 28:23) may be instructional and pedagogical in that they summon the reader to attention and the instruction offered is of timeless duration.

Two specific examples which Sheppard gives of wisdom used as an assessment or evaluation are Ps 1-2 and 2 Sam 23:1-7. With regard to Ps 1-2, he argues [1980: 138-44] that the introductory function of Ps 1 to the Psalter was the result of late redactional activity and that a real association between Ps 1 and Ps 2 was intended: this is partly evidenced by the *Gratulationsformel* at the beginning of Ps 1 and the end of Ps 2 which acts as an *inclusio*. What Ps 1 sets forth as a didactic

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1. This can be done without excessive damage to Sheppard's position since in many of the texts he analyzes, he first discusses the importance of the redactional arrangement of the material before developing his ideas on the hermeneutical function of wisdom.

generalization is exemplified in historical terms in Ps 2: the general term "wicked" in Ps 1 is spelled out in terms of the nations and their rulers in Ps 2. While the righteous meditate (יהגה) on the Torah in Ps 1, the nations meditate (יהגה) against Yahweh in Ps 2. According to Sheppard, the demand to read the Torah as a guide to wisdom in Ps 1 is what the redactor presupposes to be illustrated by the Psalter.

This perspective, with necessary changes, may offer a new direction in examining the function that wisdom traditions and motifs play in Isaiah. Firstly, the underlying theme running through chs 28-33, the tension between the just and the sinner is summed up by Ps 1-2. The counsel of the wicked (עצת רשעים) is reminiscent of the counsel that is hidden from Yahweh in Isa 29:15 and of those who carry out their own plans and not Yahweh's in 30:1. The way of the wicked (דרך חטאים) in Ps 1:1 is reminiscent of those who wish to leave the way and the path in Isa 30:11 and also of the path that lies desolate in Isa 33:8. The path of the righteous (דרך צדיקים) is reminiscent of the path indicated by Yahweh in Isa 30:21. The חטאים and לצים of Ps 1:1 are dealt with in Isa 28:14,22; 29:20: the scoffer is doomed to destruction while the rebellious children in Isa 30:1 add sin to sin (חטאת על חטאת). In Ps 1:2 the just delight in the תורת יהוה while in Isa 30:9, the wicked reject it. The just in Ps 1:3 are like a tree planted beside streams of water (פלגי מים) and in Isa 32:2 those whose characteristics are justice and righteousness are like streams of water (פלגי מים). The comparison of the just to the fruitfulness of nature in Ps 1:3 (the image of tree whose leaf does not wither) is found throughout Isa 28-33 and especially in 29:17f; 30:23f; 32:15f. The image of the wicked in Ps 1:4 as chaff (כמץ) that is driven away echoes Isa 29:5. The advice given in Ps 2:11 (אשרי כל חוסי בו) is similar to that found in Isa 30:18 (אשרי כל חובי בו). The wrath of

Yahweh against the nations in Ps 2:11 is equalled in Isa 30:27-28. The instruction in Ps 2:10 to pay attention (השכיל) is similar to the instruction given in Isa 28:22,23; 32:9.

Sheppard's important observation [1980: 141] that one can interpret Ps 2 through Ps 1 may be relevant also for the interpretation of Isa 28-33. Such an observation offers a new way of looking at the redactional activity within the section. Given the sustained tension between the just and the evil throughout the section, it appears that the nations, especially Egypt and Assyria, become synonymous with the wicked. Consequently, just as in Ps 2 the nations serve as an historical example of the wicked and David as an example of the just, so too in Isa 28-33, the function of the "historical" condemnation of Ephraim (28:1-4), Judah's pact with Egypt (28:14-18; 30:1-5,6-7; 30:1-3) and the destruction of Ariel (29:1-4) all serve as examples of evil and foolish people who followed their own plans and not those of Yahweh. In other words, rather than look at Isa 28-33 as a series of Isaian oracles augmented and actualized for later generations, one can begin from the present form of the text with its emphasis on the dichotomy between good and evil and look at 28:1-4, 14-18; 29:1-4; 30:1-5,6-7; 31:1-3 merely as "historical" examples which are assessed and evaluated according to the same criteria of the just and evil found in Ps 1-2.

In his second example, 2 Sam 23:1-7, Sheppard [144-58] suggests that in the present redactional arrangement of 2 Sam 22-23, the last words of David (23:1-7) offer a sapiential assessment of the Davidic traditions. Criteria of righteousness are offered in the way David's life and actions are interpreted in his final song (ch 22) and his last words. 23:1-7 is combined with ch 22 to form a dual retrospective commentary on the

previous material.

Such observations may prove useful for an interpretation of Isa 32:1-8, often considered as the last words of Isaiah. V1-8 may offer an assessment in that it looks back to its previous chapters and by resuming the themes found there (the opening of the eyes and ears, the fertility of nature, the rash coming to understanding) provide criteria for knowing when the time of salvation will come. The power of Yahweh in 32:1-2 contrasts with the ineffectiveness of the leaders throughout chs 28-31: the plans and wisdom of Yahweh have proved stronger than the human plans and schemes of men.

To sum up: it is more productive to see wisdom influence in the book of Isaiah not in terms of the extent to which Isaiah the prophet used the arguments of the wise men but rather to examine the way in which the various tenets associated with the wisdom traditions are used in the present form of the text and how they function as an assessment and evaluation across a wide corpus of material.

## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSION

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A contextual reading of chs 28-33 highlights the consistent dichotomy that is sustained between the just and the evil: while the just are rewarded with blessings from the world of nature, the wicked perish and are destroyed by the same natural elements. Such a perspective supports the emphasis which Vermeylen [1977: 756] attributes to those responsible for editing the book at the end of the fifth century: the pious community in Jerusalem who maintained a rigorous fidelity to the Law and who opposed the wealthy and influential who had regard neither for the Law nor for social justice. The identification of these two groups helps us gain access to an important theme sustained throughout the book. Lack [139] and Sweeney [23] both show in some detail how the same theme is present in chs 1 and 65-66, chapters which form a "redactional envelope" [Sweeney 196] around the entire book. In particular, Sweeney argues that 1:1; 1:19-20 and 1:22-28 are redactional verses, the purpose of which was to focus existing material around the distinction made between the righteous and the wicked. He demonstrates [23-24] how the imagery of 1:29-31 penetrates all of chs 65-66; the writers of these chapters employed the imagery and language of this oracle in presenting their views on the coming punishment of the apostates and triumph of the elect. By portraying their contrasting fates, ch 1 attempts to convince the people to choose the path of righteousness. This attempt is kept up throughout chs 28-33 and elsewhere: as Sweeney points out, much of Third Isaiah and other chapters such as 3:10-11; 4:3-6; chs 24-27 correspond to ch 1 and 65-66 with their emphasis on distinguishing between good and evil.

This study of chs 28-33 supports the analysis of Lack [1973: 69-75] who suggests [70] that the key to appreciating the imagery of the section lies in ch 28 and that the key to understanding the movement within the chapters is found in ch 33. He describes [70] ch 28 as a platform of ideas which are repeated in chs 29-33: the three interventions of Yahweh on Mt Zion (29:1-8; 30:27-33; 31:4-9) are anticipated by the image of 28:2; the storm imagery (28:2,15,17,18) is sustained throughout the section (29:6; 30:28,30) as is the contrast between confusion and refuge in Yahweh (30:2,15; 31:3; 32:1-3,9-11,18) while the wisdom perception of Yahweh (29:9,14,24; 30:20; 31:2; 32:3-5) is prepared for by the inclusion of the parable in 28:23-29. The emphasis on the נִוֵּן of Yahweh in v5-6 is taken up again in 32:1-20, pericopes around which the section 28-33 is packaged.

Lack suggests [70] that the composition of ch 33 with its alternate descriptions of destruction and security corresponds to the constant juxtaposition of punishment and praise found throughout chs 28-32, the best example being in 29:1-8. In particular, the two sections, 33:1-6 and 33:7-16 which move from extremes of great anguish and destruction to security and peace, epitomized by wisdom (v6) and justice (v15), reflect the movement of the preceding chapters. In 33:7-16 the lot of the just and impious is clearly differentiated as in the previous chapters: now the just living on high in 33:16 are given the same attribute as Yahweh in v5.

There is ample evidence, both from vocabulary and themes, that chs 28-33 have links with Second Isaiah: 28:5-6; 29:17-24; 30:18; 30:19-26; 32:1-8, 15-20; 33:17-24 anticipate the language and themes of Second Isaiah. In this regard the section may be seen as a microcosm of what is



taking place throughout First Isaiah and once again raises the question of the place of these chapters not only in First Isaiah but also within the entire book.

The perspective of Lack [69-75] in situating chs 28-33 within chs 1-35 is attractive. He notes generally [70] that in chs 13-23 and 24-27, as in chs 28-33, the attitudes of the people, whether wayward or wise, take first place: this emphasis highlights Isaian themes found already in 5:19,21 and 6:10. More specifically, he notes that 33:7-16 has similarities with chs 24-27 (decrees are scorned in 24:5; 33:8; the land languishes in 24:4; 33:9; the wicked conceive evil in 26:17; 33:11).

Isa 28:5-6 (1) synthesizes Isa 4:2f and 11:2f:

- צבי תפארה in 28:5 correspond to צבי תפארה in 4:2 and נשאר in 4:3.

- רוח, משפט in 28:6a correspond to רוח, משפט in 11:2-3.

- רוח גבורה in 28:6b corresponds to רוח גבורה in 11:2 and אל גבור in 9:5.

32:1-5 is a synthesis of 4:6; 6:10; 11:3. The just king (11:1) is a refuge (4:6). Thanks to him, the eyes and ears are opened (6:10) and true values are restored (28:5-6; 5:20).

The vocabulary and theme of Isa 4:4 is the best explanation for the insertion of 32:9-14 before the pericope on the return of the spirit (v15). 32:1f contain elements which have been transported from 4:2-6:

רוח	32:2	4:6
צל	32:2	4:6
בנות	32:9-14	4:4

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1. Lack [73] suggests that the singular in 28:6 supposes that the messianic king enters into the perspective of the redactor.

רוח יהוה	32:15	4:4
משפט וצדקה	32:16	4:2

The position of the parable of the vine in 5:1-7 coming after ch 4 may account for the mention of the vine in 32:12. The word מעשה, a key term in ch 5, is important also in 32:15-20.

Such connections stress that while chs 28 and 33 are instrumental in the interpretation of the section chs 28-33, an awareness of the interconnectedness of the section with other parts of chs 1-35 throws light on the order in which the material within these chapters has been assembled.

Lack detects [75] three fundamental symbols behind chs 13-23, 24-27, 28-33:

- (a) 13-23 evolves as a day with a midday (ch 18) and an evening (ch 21). Rising in the East (13:5) this day ends over the sea (ch 23).
- (b) 24-27 uses the symbol of the deluge with all the possibilities of its associated imagery (25:11; 26:1f). Also present is the theme of the vegetation of a purified land (27:2f).
- (c) In 28-33 fire and water combine to destroy everything that is not anchored on faith in Yahweh; after the destruction there blossoms a radiant harvest full of peace (32:1f,15f;33:17f).

In the three sections, the redactor did not create anything new: he merely had to be sensitive to the images so that the sections could blend together and form significant sequences. The poems juxtaposed make up a unity by their *structuration symbolique*, i.e. the material is structured

around one or several symbols or images.

Lack's view on chs 34-35 [74] contributes to an understanding of the intentional eschatological perspective which extends from ch 13 to ch 35 and which is also emphasized by Kaiser [1983: 1-10]. Lack links ch 34 with ch 13. The word **יָמֵי** is only found in 13:5; 14:12-13 and 34:4,5. The cosmic ideas in ch 13 and 34 give to the concept of the Day of Yahweh its transcendental dimension: the indication of time (34:10,17) no longer relates to the world but to eternal chaos (34:11). Although Isa 35 is normally linked to Second Isaiah, Lack [74] prefers to emphasize the role of ch 35 in the eschatology of chs 1-39: the theme of "ingathering" (11:2; 14:1-2; 27:13; 35:10) and the "way" (11:16; 35:8) enter into the eschatological vision of chs 1-39.

Ch 35 is not an accumulation of actualizing glosses inserted after the book had been completed but constitutes structural elements important in the actual arrangement of the book. Ch 35 was not placed here by accident but makes up a diptych with ch 34 with which it encloses the section on the Day of Yahweh (chs 13-35). Ch 35 puts the theme of the "ingathering" and the "way" within the section 13-35 which also contains the schema of the city saved *in extremis* which is to be forever based on justice and righteousness.

Lack concludes [142] that chs 1-39 as a literary unit is the most recent part of the Book of Isaiah, chs 40-66 being more or less in place before 1-39 received its present form. The redactor of 1-39 (who worked at the beginning of the fifth century) implanted on all the prophetic collections an eschatological vision which appears in its purity in 9:7-12:6 which is not unlike Ez 38f in that it contains the motif of the *Völkersturm*, the mountain of Yahweh, the ingathering of Israel and

the gift of the spirit and knowledge of Yahweh. Isa 40-55, 56-66 helped the redactor to orchestrate the themes of "ingathering" and the "way" which were for him integral parts of the work of Yahweh on Mt Zion.

Similarly, Sweeney, from the connections he establishes between chs 1-4 and the rest of the book, concludes [185] that the editors of the final book fashioned chs 1-39 as a preface to chs 40-66: First Isaiah is presented in relation to Second and Third Isaiah. The aim of the entire book was to re-establish and maintain the Jewish community in the mid- to late-fifth century. Yahweh is the God of all creation and all peoples must adhere to him. For the post-exilic community, the book of Isaiah represents an attempt to answer the question of self-definition. Sweeney's conclusion that a major editing took place at this time echoes Vermeylen's position [1977: 756]. It also supports the contextual reading of chs 28-33 which highlights the struggle between the righteous and wicked.

Other recent attempts in coming to terms with the unity of the book have been somewhat superficial. Roberts [1982: 130-43] speaks of the components of the Isaianic corpus moving in the same stream of tradition; the entire book revolves around the central concept of Yahweh as the Holy One of Israel. Oswalt [1986: 17-23] looks at the book as a *compositional* as opposed to a *stylistic* unit and argues that there is a basic unity and repetition in the ideas presented in the sixty six chapters. Gitay [1983: 223-31] employs the *reader-response* theory in an effort to treat the book as a whole. He sees a natural development from one chapter to the next which the reader can perceive despite the presence of minor contradictions within individual chapters. However, his approach by-passes the question of editorial activity within First

Isaiah, most of which he attributes to the prophet.

Eaton [1982: 58-76] approaches the unity of the book through its "liturgical" texts. He sees in the later strata of chs 13-14, 24-27, 33, 35, 40-66, liturgical assertions of Yahweh's supremacy [60]. It was along these lines that the earlier tradition of Isaiah was carried on by his later disciples. Dumbrell [1985: 112] states that if the book is read as a unit, there is an overmastering theme which unites the whole: Yahweh's protection of Jerusalem. The book moves from the present worship offered by Jerusalem under judgment arising from the neglect of Yahweh's kingship to the worship of Yahweh in the new Jerusalem. Yahweh becomes a major symbol uniting city and sacred community. This echoes the position of Lack [70] who sees the lowering of Assyria because of its pride, the humiliation of the pride of the chosen people and the restoration of Zion as an indivisible unit.

Jeppesen, in a brief article dealing with 28:16 [1984: 93-99], suggests that Second Isaiah revived the message of First Isaiah by the insertion of subtle nuances in the text.

Clements [1985: 95-113], contrary to Lack and Sweeney, argues that, from the time of their origin, the prophetic sayings of Isa 40-55 were intended as a supplement and sequel to a collection of the eighth century Isaiah of Jerusalem. For example, the theme of blindness begins with 6:9-10 and is developed in Second Isaiah; Isa 40:1; 41:8-9; 43:6-7; 44:1-2 pick up the theme of the divine election of Israel - the time of rejection is now past and a new age is about to dawn [104]. Yahweh's "witnesses" in 43:10,12; 44:8; 55:4 are a reference to the "Isaiah memoir" regarding the sign name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. From a reference to those whose task it was to act as "reliable witnesses" (8:2) to the

inscribing of the child's intended name upon a tablet, the idea has developed that the whole of Isaiah's prophecy is a "witness" to God's action and intentions towards his people. Clements sees [108] a link between תעורה and תורה in 8:16 and תורה in 42:4, 21. He also sees [108] 44:26 referring back to 6:11; the later passage declares the terms of the "original prophetic commission" given to Isaiah to have been fulfilled. Isa 40-55, therefore, should no longer be regarded as a self-contained and independent body of material. The prophecies of Second Isaiah reveal a conscious dependence on earlier sayings of Isaiah of Jerusalem. The existence [111] of earlier Isaianic prophecies provided the primary stimulus in the shaping of much of the contents of chs 40-55.

Clements questions the accepted theory that chs 40-55 constitute a definite literary unit composed by one author in Babylon: specifically he notes that the distinctive form of address to "Zion" is strange for those living in Babylon and notes also the heavy dependence on the forms and language of the Psalms.

However, this may be an oversimplistic solution to the development of the book of Isaiah which Clements describes as "one of the most complex structures of the entire OT". Firstly, the "earlier prophecies of Isaiah" which Second Isaiah develops can be quite elusive. Clements assumes the integrity and authenticity of the *Denkschrift*: yet it has to be kept in mind that its position is in ch 6 and that it is in fact ch 1 that introduces all the themes of the book including those of Second Isaiah, as amply illustrated by Sweeney [101-103]. Equally, Auld warns [1980: 575] that chs 6-8 are only part of an extensive and elaborate portrait and not a lightly touched up *mémoire*. There is no real evidence of the extent and size of the collection of prophecies in existence when

Second Isaiah came to be written.

Earlier Clements argued [1982: 121] that ch 35, which he calls "a summarized content of the prophecies of chs 40-55" came originally before ch 40. But if the purpose of chs 40-55 is to continue the theme of Isaiah's prophecies, who inserted ch 35 and why was this felt necessary? Clements [1985: 98] admits that chs 24-27 are the latest chapters of the book, later even than chs 56-66. Other late material is to be found in chs 34-35 and scattered throughout other parts of chs 1-21. Consequently, it makes more sense to regard chs 1-39, with Lack [142] and Sweeney [185], as the most recent literary unit of the book of Isaiah. The present arrangement of material suggests that chs 1-39 were formed after Second Isaiah had been completed rather than that Second Isaiah was written as a complement to chs 1-39.

The tendency is still strong, even among recent scholars, to establish historical redactional layers in First Isaiah and ultimately return to the message and thought of the eighth century Isaiah of Jerusalem. Sweeney [187], too, while arguing in favour of the unity of the book does not resist this temptation: within chs 1-4 he attempts to recover the prophet's words by

"working backwards chronologically from the latest stages in the composition of the text to the earliest."

Reconstructions of various redactions as suggested by Barth, Vermeylen and Clements are rarely convincing and always remain hypothetical. They are misleading because, in trying to rediscover the words of the eighth century prophet and later elaborations of his

message, their attempts are a distraction from understanding and appreciating the message of the entire book as a literary whole. The problem of apparently contradictory material within chs 1-39 is not resolved by establishing (and omitting) certain texts as "secondary" and regarding the "primary" material as "authentic". A more fruitful approach lies in establishing linguistic and thematic ties between chs 1-39 and 40-66. Looked at from this perspective, apparent contradictions within the material often fade away: for example, the promises of hope and prosperity in 28:5-6; 29:17-24; 32:1-8 seem out of place within the woe collection of chs 28-33, yet they prepare the reader for the emphasis on deliverance in chs 40-66. Such passages are not "secondary", "non-Isaianic" material but play an important function within chs 1-66.

Sweeney's hope [199] that further research will provide a more complete picture of the relationship between the "messages" of the individual texts which make up the book and the systematic conception which governs the book as a whole points in a positive direction. If one were, perhaps, to give this systematic conception a "centre" around which the book unfolds, it is unlikely that one would choose the commission of the prophet. There is not enough substance within the *Denkschrift* for it to sum up the aims of the entire book. Rather the "centre" may be found in ch 1 which acts as an overture to the book and together with chs 65-66 forms an *inclusio* which interprets and nuances the material it encloses.

The conclusions arrived at in this study of chs 28-33 and their implications for the unity of the book of Isaiah side squarely with those of Lack and Sweeney. A study of chs 28-33 demonstrates that no verse or word within the section can be under-estimated but has to be seen



within the immediate context of its chapter and the wider context of the book. The study of the function of wisdom within the section shows that arguments which revolve around the extent to which Isaiah the prophet was influenced by "wise men" are over-simplistic: the importance of wisdom influence in Isaiah lies in its *literary* function of assessing and evaluating material with a view towards instructing the reader.

There is room for development and further inquiry into the issues raised in this study. Firstly, the relationship between the emphasis on the righteous and the wicked in chs 1 and 65-66 and that found in chs 28-33 could be studied in detail. Close connections between the theme found in these different parts of the book may reveal that the message of the book is to be found in its entirety and not in the "messages" of individual texts. Secondly, further inquiry into the relationship between chs 28-33 (and other texts in chs 1-39 which anticipate themes in chs 40-66) and Second Isaiah may prove fruitful: it may point to the conclusion that the intention behind the final edition of chs 1-39 was to bind it more closely with chs 40-66 and so present a unified book under the name of the prophet Isaiah.

Thirdly, there are many other passages in First and Second Isaiah where the role of wisdom needs to be investigated. Childs has only touched on the issue with his discovery of the *summary-appraisal* form; and Sheppard has not adapted his ideas on wisdom as a *hermeneutical construct* to the book of Isaiah. The fact that Barth sees the sapiential schools as an important influence on the editors of the AR reveals the *literary* role that scholars are prepared to attribute to the elusive concept of wisdom. Yet the way it has been used as a literary technique within the book of Isaiah remains to be explored.

In the final analysis, however, it must be recognized that the book of Isaiah offers principally a *poetic* perspective on the power and influence of the **יְהוָה רֹבֵר** through the changing circumstances of history: part of the richness of the book lies in its lack of response to analytical inquiry and more in the potential of its language to suggest and evoke through the adaptability of imagery and metaphor: in the words of A.G. Auld [1980: 580]:

"Most of the book of Isaiah shares the ability of all good poetry to suggest rather than to state, to evoke rather than define: that is the opportunity it offers and also part of the problem it poses for all succeeding tradition."

## EXCURSUS

ידע and בין

## Excursus

THE VERBS בִּין AND יָדַעThe verb בִּין

According to the concordance of Mandelkern, the verb בִּין and its derivatives occur 28 times in the Book of Isaiah:

Qal:	x x x x
Niphal:	3:3; 5:21; 10:13; 29:14.
Hiphil:	6:9,10; 28:9,19; 29:16; 32:4; 40:14,21; 43:10; 44:18; 56:11; 57:1.
Hithpolel:	1:3; 14:16; 43:18; 52:15.
The noun בִּינָה:	11:2; 27:11; 29:14,24; 33:19.
The noun תְּבוּנָה:	40:14,28; 44:19.

Ringgren [1977: 99–107], however, deals with 6:9–10; 32:4; 43:10; 44:18 in the qal section of his survey of the verb. The confusion has probably come about because of the similarity in form of the hiphil and qal imperfects of the verb. The contexts of 6:9–10; 32:4; 43:10; 44:18 support Ringgren's classification. In practice, the distinction between the qal and hiphil forms of the verb does not present any serious difficulties since the hiphil form very often denotes the same meaning as the qal: and when the hiphil does have a specific causative meaning, e.g. Isa 28:9, this is normally clear from the context.

Qal

The verb בִּין in the qal has the meaning "to perceive", "to take heed", e.g. Ezra 8:15; Neh 13:7; Job 9:11; Prov 7:7. It is often associated

with terms meaning "to hear" or "to see", e.g. wherever Job looks he cannot perceive God (23:8) and in 13:1f he says

"My eye has seen (ראה) all this and my ear has heard (שמע) and understood (בין) it."

In Ps 94:7f the godless say

"The Lord does not see (ראה), the God of Jacob does not understand (בין)."

In Ps 5:1 the verbs שמע and בין are found in parallel in the phrase

"Hear my words, Lord, give heed to my groaning."

The verb בין is often found with the verb ידע. The two verbs are parallel in Job 14:21; 15:9; Ps 82:5; Prov 2:5; 19:25; 24:12. The Book of Hosea (14:10) ends by urging those who are "wise and understanding to know and understand" the ways of the Lord (in Jer 9:12 only the word that comes from Yahweh can give correct understanding). In Ps 92:6 ידע and בין are found in parallel: the dull man cannot know or understand the wonderful works of God. In Job 42:3, Job confesses that he has spoken of matters without knowledge (בלי דעת) or understanding (לא אבין).

In Isaiah the qal occurs in 6:9-10, 32:4, 43:10, 44:18 and is associated with verbs of hearing, seeing, knowing. Isa 32:4 denotes a reversal of the situation of 6:9-10. Isa 43:10 picks up the same theme in a different context. In Isa 44:18, the idols see, hear and understand nothing. In all texts, understanding comes as a result of seeing and hearing.

Niphal

The niphal participle נִבּוֹן is a typical wisdom word. In 18 out of 22 occurrences of the word in the OT, it is connected with the root חִכְמָה. Those whom God chooses are "wise and intelligent": Joseph in Gen 41:33,39, the wise men chosen by Moses in Deut 1:13 and Solomon in 1 Kgs 3:12. Israel in Deut 4:6 is "a wise and understanding people". The term is particularly at home in Proverbs, e.g. 10:13; 16:21; where it is often connected with רָעַת (14:6,33; 15:14; 18:15; 19:25). A similar association is found in Jer 4:22 where נִבּוֹן is found with the verb יָדַע and in Hos 14:9 where נִבּוֹן, חִכְמָה, בִּין, יָדַע occur in the same verse. Generally נִבּוֹן has positive connotations and refers to a human quality or characteristic that is desirable.

In Isaiah, the niphal occurs in 3:3; 5:21; 10:13; 29:14. Isa 10:3 is the only example of the niphal used as a finite verb in the OT. The participle occurs in 3:3; 5:21; 29:14. In 3:3, נִבּוֹן לַחֵשׁ is similar to 1 Sam 16:18 and means "to be skilled in". In other texts (5:21, 10:13, 29:14) נִבּוֹן is found in close proximity to the noun חִכְמָה just as it is elsewhere in the OT but with one important difference: in Isaiah, נִבּוֹן refers not to a wisdom that is to be desired but to something spurious, inferior and misleading. The expert in charms in 3:3 is one of a list of those considered helpless. In 5:21; 10:13; 29:14 the futility of human wisdom is opposed to divine wisdom. This is also the case in Jer 4:22.

Hiphil

The hiphil of בִּין often has the same meaning as the qal, "to give heed", "to perceive", "to understand". Examples of this meaning of the hiphil occur in Neh 8:12; Prov 14:8; Ps 33:15, as well as in the Isaian

texts of 40:21 and 57:1. Four examples occur in Daniel that have to do with giving heed to revelation (8:5,17; 9:23; 10:11). When the hiphil means "to understand", it is frequently connected with the verb יָדַע, e.g. Job 28:23; 42:3; 32:9-10. It is found in wisdom contexts in the Book of Daniel, 1:4,17; 2:21. It is found at the very start of the Book of Proverbs (1:2), and it also occurs in Mic 4:12 where the nations "do not understand the plan of Yahweh".

The best examples of the hiphil in a causative sense are found in Isa 28:9; 40:14; other examples are the six times it occurs in Ps 119 (vv34, 73, 125, 130, 144, 169) which speak of gaining understanding in the commandments of God. It occurs in Job 6:24; Dan 8:16; 11:3 in the sense of "teach" and is used to express the effectiveness of the teacher (1 Chron 25:8; 2 Chron 35:3; Ezra 8:16; Neh 8:7,9). In Hos 4:14, the people are described in a derogatory way (עַם לֹא יָבִין). Twice the hiphil has Yahweh as its subject (1 Chron 28:9; Job 28:23).

In Isaiah the hiphil occurs in 28:9,16; 40:14,21; 56:11; 57:1. It is associated with one or more of the following words: רָאָה שָׁמַע יָדַע יָרָה חֲכָמָה:

28:9:	יָרָה דָּעַת שְׁמוּעָה
29:14-15:	רָאָה יָדַע חֲכָמָה
40:14:	יָרָה יָדַע
40:21:	יָדַע שָׁמַע
56:11:	יָדַע

Isa 56:11 and 57:1, which deplore the people's lack of understanding, may be compared to Isa 1:3, Jer 4:12 and Mic 4:12. It is ironic that the

accusation levelled against the shepherds in 56:11 should be levelled against Yahweh in 29:16. To some extent, Isa 28:9 corresponds to 40:14: in 28:9 where the subject is Yahweh (see v11b), the question is asked "To whom will he (Yahweh) explain the message?" whereas in 40:14 the question is reversed "Who can make (Yahweh) understand?". In Isa 28:9; 29:16; 40:14,21, the verb is found in the context of a rhetorical question which can express surprise (40:14,21) or displeasure (28:9; 29:16).

### Hithpolel

Ringgren's statement [103] that this form is "found almost exclusively outside of wisdom literature" is not strictly true. Even when he excludes Job 11:11, 23:15, 26:14, 30:20, 31:1, 32:12, 37:14, because they do not have "a wisdom character", most of the other texts he gives as illustrations of the use of this form are taken from Job, Psalms and Proverbs. Whedbee [50] and Wildberger [19] contrary to Ringgren, consider that most of the texts where the hithpolel occurs, should be considered as wisdom contexts, Wildberger concluding that the intransitive use of the verb as in Isa 1:3 is decisive for wisdom.

The general meaning of חִתְּפוּל is "to consider diligently", "to look at closely", e.g. 1 Kgs 3:21; Job 31:1; 32:12; Ps 37:10; Isa 14:16. It is used in a context of "giving heed" to God (Job 23:15; Ps 107:43; 119:95). "Giving heed" leads to understanding in Job 26:14; Ps 119:100,104.

Twice the hithpolel is parallel with a verb meaning "to see" (Isa 52:15; Jer 2:10); twice with שמע (Job 37:14; Isa 52:15); and three times with the verb יָרָא (Job 38:18; 11:11; Isa 1:3). Jer 23:20 and 30:24 announce that there will be a sudden understanding at the end of days.



In Isaiah, the hithpolel occurs in Isa 1:3; 14:16; 43:18; 52:15 and is found with the verbs שמע, ראה, ידע, זכר:

1:3:	ידע
14:16:	ראה ידע
43:18:	ידע זכר
52:15	ראה שמע ידע

Isa 14:16, 43:18, simply reflect the normal meaning of the hithpolel "to look at closely" but the examples in 1:3 and 52:15 do not have this meaning. They have a more general sense: 1:3 has no object and the object in 52:15 is expressed only in general terms, אשר לא שמעו. The verb in 1:3 and 52:15 may be used to express an attitude rather than an objective observation. Both texts are similar in theme and in vocabulary to 6:9-10.

### The noun בינה

The noun בינה occurs 39 times in the OT, 19 of which are associated with the noun חכמה. In 6 further instances, it is in a wisdom context (Prov 3:5; 4:1; 9:6; 23:4; 36:2; Sir 6:25). It can refer to the office of the king as in 1 Chron 22:12; 2 Chron 2:12. In Deut 4:6, the law is the wisdom and understanding of the people.

The noun occurs in Isaiah in 11:2; 27:11; 29:14,24; 33:19. In three of the texts the noun is associated with wisdom, knowledge, instruction. In 11:2; 29:24, it has positive connotations but in 27:11; 29:14 and 33:19, it has negative connotations. In 11:2, the noun occurs in the same context as 1 Chron 22:12; 2 Chron 2:12 where it is a characteristic of the king. Despite the difference in vocabulary and phraseology, a similarity

exists between Deut 4:6 and Isa 27:11. The former refers to the wisdom and understanding which will make Israel a wise and understanding people while the latter refers to Israel as a people of no understanding. In 33:19, the people do not understand but in a different sense: it simply means that they cannot understand the foreign language of the oppressor. Between 29:14 and 29:24 a gradual development in thought takes place from ignorance to understanding. One of the accusations made against the people in v13 concerns the "command of men learned by rote (מלמרה)". As a result, the understanding of their נבונים shall be hidden. But the passage ends positively, reaching its climax in v24 when those who err in spirit will know understanding and those who murmur will accept instruction (ילמרו). Finally, although there are no exact similarities in vocabulary, one might compare Isa 29:24 to Deut 4:6: in the former "understanding" is parallel to "accepting instruction" while in the latter "understanding" is dependent upon the "statutes and ordinances" of the law.

### תבונה The noun

The noun תבונה has strong associations with wisdom literature. It occurs 42 times in the OT: 22 times it is explicitly connected with the noun חכמה. It can simply denote an occupation as in Ex 31:3; 35:31; 36:1; 1 Kgs 7:14. It is used of human wisdom in Ez 28:4, where it refers to the King of Tyre. It is used of idols which have no understanding in Hos 13:2 (see also Isa 44:19). Unlike the noun בינה it can refer to divine wisdom (Job 26:12; Ps 136:5; Prov 3:19; Isa 40:14,28; Jer 10:12; 51:15).

The noun occurs in Isaiah in 40:14,28; 44:19. In 40:14; 44:19, it is parallel to רעת. In 40:14,19, it is Yahweh who possesses תבונה. Isa 44:18-19 is similar in theme and vocabulary to 6:9-10. In Isaiah,

תבונה complies with the nuance of the word in the rest of the OT. Isa 40:14,28 refer to the understanding of Yahweh. Isa 44:19 states that there is neither knowledge nor understanding anywhere, i.e. the power to discriminate between idols and the true God.

### Summary:

A particular significance or meaning cannot be attached to each grammatical form, e.g. the qal, hiphil, hithpoel can have the same meaning. The noun בִּינָה and the niph'al participle בִּינוּ are sometimes interchangeable (Deut 4:6).

The verb in all its forms is found most frequently in wisdom literature and in wisdom contexts in other OT books. It is associated particularly with the verb יָדַע, its derivatives and with the noun בִּינָה. The verb is found in prophetic books, apart from Isaiah. Jer 4:22; 23:20; 30:24; Ez 28:4; Hos 4:14; 13:2; 14:9 are particularly interesting in that they offer examples of the verb used outside wisdom literature and are similar in vocabulary and context to Isaiah. For example, Jer 4:22 is similar to Isa 1:3. Hos 4:14 is similar to Isa 27:11. Ez 28:4 is similar to Isa 10:13. Mic 4:12 is similar to Isa 6:9-10.

A further interesting text outside of wisdom literature is Deut 4:6 which describes Israel as a "wise and understanding people". This stands in antithesis to Isa 1:3 where Israel "does not know" and "does not understand". It also stands in antithesis to Isa 5:21. Deut 4:6 states that the law will make the people "wise and understanding in the eyes of the peoples" but Isa 5:21 threatens those "who are wise and understanding in their own eyes". Isa 6:9-10 ensures that "this people" will not understand and Isa 27:11 states that this is "a people without

understanding".

The text which best acts as a focus around which to cluster other texts containing the verb יָדַעַת is 6:9-10 which describes the commission of Isaiah in terms of ensuring that the people "do not understand", and "do not know". Clearly associated with this text is 1:3, similar in theme, which acts as an introduction to the book. Isa 5:21, both in its immediate context and as part of the list of woes preceding ch 6, takes up the theme of lack of true understanding. In 27:11, the reason given for the total destruction of the city and land is introduced by the explicative יָדַעַת: "for they are a people without understanding". Isa 28:9,19 implies that no-one is ready to receive knowledge: there is no-one whom Yahweh "can make to understand". Isa 29:14-24 moves from lack of understanding to understanding. In 43:18-19, neither the idols nor indeed anyone else has understanding.

Although the phrase חַכְמָה וְדַעַת must be seen primarily in the light of the use of this phrase to denote a characteristic of the king (1 Chron 22:12; 2 Chron 2:12), this normal nuance in Isa 11:3 is subordinated to the general connotation of the verb within the book of Isaiah.

The theme of lack of understanding of 6:9-10 is sometimes reversed and understanding takes place. This has already been noted in 29:24. Understanding also takes place in 33:19. In 43:10, the phrase "that you may know and understand" is an antithesis of 1:3. In 52:15, with the appearance of the servant, kings will understand. Finally, it is Yahweh in 40:13,28 who truly has understanding.

The true understanding of Yahweh contrasts with the arrogance of

the King of Assyria in 10:13 who boasts of his wisdom and understanding. This is an important text since, in the unit 10:5-34, it gives the reason why Assyria is no longer the instrument of Yahweh used to punish Israel and is a crucial text in Barth's theory [21-27] of the Anti-Assyrian Redaction. If Barth's theory is correct, then one of the theological preoccupations of the AR editors was their concern with the wisdom and understanding of God (vv15-16) compared to the wisdom and understanding of man (v13) (1). Indeed Sheppard places the origins of the AR in the sapiential schools of the Josianic period [1985: 209-10].

The fact that the verb יָבִין is taken up and developed along different lines, sometimes similar to 6:9-10, sometimes opposite to it, sometimes concerned with the superiority of God's wisdom over that of man, suggests that different redactors and editors have shown a sustained interest in it right up to the final edition of the book.

### The Verb יָעַן

The verb יָעַן and its derivatives occur 68 times in the Book of Isaiah. It is found too frequently in the OT to permit a total and accurate classification but a general survey has been carried out by Botterweck [1977: 448-81]. The following is an attempt to classify the uses of the verb as used in Isaiah. Other OT references will be given to clarify the meaning of the verb in Isaiah.

The verb יָעַן is often found parallel to other verbs within the same semantic range. It is found with the verb הָאֵן in Isa 5:19; 29:15; 41:20;

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1. The same theme occurs in 29:13-16 with 29:15-16 corresponding to 10:5.

44:9; 58:3; 61:9. The first two texts (5:19; 29:15) are interesting in that they are the only two examples in First Isaiah where the two verbs occur in strict parallel. Both are found in wisdom contexts: 5:19 and 5:21 threaten those who think that their plan is superior to Yahweh's while 29:15 finds the people trying to hide deep their plan from him. Central to both texts is the noun עצה (5:19; 29:15). In the first instance, it is the people who mock God's plan

"Let Yahweh speed his work that we may see it;  
let his purpose draw near that we may know it."

while in the second text, the people try to hide their own plan from God

"Who sees us? Who knows us?"

The verb is found parallel to the verb שמע in 33:13; 40:21,28; 48:6-8. In these texts, hearing is simply the activity which precedes knowing. The two verbs are used in very close proximity in 48:6-8 where the people are to hear and know new things, never known before. In four Isaian texts, there is an accumulation of various verbs belonging to the same semantic range as ידע (1):

6:9:	שמע	בין	ידע	ראה
32:3f:	שמע	בין	קשב	ראה
40:21:	שמע	בין	ידע	
41:20:	שכל	שים	ידע	ראה
44:18:	שכל	בין	ידע	ראה

Outside of Isaiah, such accumulations of similar verbs are not found except in Num 24:16 where שמע, חזה, ראה, שור occur together in the oracle of Balaam. In the Isaian texts: of the four verbs used in

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1. In Isa 41:20, שים has the same meaning as לב שים and so falls into the same semantic range as בין and ידע.

6:9-10, "seeing" and "hearing" do not lead to "knowing" and "understanding". In 32:3-4, on the other hand, "seeing" and "hearing" lead to "understanding". In 44:18, Yahweh closes the ears and eyes of the idols so that they cannot know or understand. In 41:20, unlike 6:9-10, the action of God is clearly known and understood.

In Isaiah, there is an emphasis upon the physical ability needed to know which involves the eyes, the ears, the heart. In 44:18, eyes are needed to see (ראה). Eyes should not be blind in 32:3 (שעה). Ears must be open in 48:8 (פתח). Ears must be attentive in 32:3 (קשב). The heart must be discerning in 44:18 (שכל). The heart should not be fat as in 6:10 (שמן). It should not be rash in 32:4 (נמהר). Such an emphasis upon the physical qualities needed to know is not very common in the OT. Apart from the isolated examples in Gen 3:7 and the oracle of Balaam, Num 24:13, the only other text is Deut 29:3 which has noticeable similarities in theme and in vocabulary with Isa 6:9-10:

<u>Deut 29:3</u>	<u>Isa 6:10</u>
לא לדעת	לבבו יבין
ענים לראות	יראה בעיניו
אזנים לשמע	באזניו ישמע

In both texts, it is Yahweh who prevents the people from hearing, seeing, knowing and understanding. In the first instance he speaks through Moses and in the second through Isaiah. Botterweck [474] associates with Deut 29:4-6 another verse in Deuteronomy, namely 4:39:

"Know therefore this day and lay it to your heart that Yahweh is God."

He sees the latter as a Deuteronomic variation of the prophetic formula

ידע כי אני יהוה

where "to know Yahweh" is synonymous with obeying the Law. In Deut 29:4, not hearing, seeing, knowing, refer to the failure of the people to keep the Law in spite of all Yahweh's historical deeds (v3). Botterweck sees similar traces of the Deuteronomic variation of this formula in Isa 41:20, 43:10.

Some instances of the verb ידע in Isaiah simply reflect the normal use of the word in the OT. It is used in Isa 29:12 to convey the idea of one who is not "skilled in reading" just as it is used elsewhere to denote the idea of a skill, e.g. the lyre players of 1 Sam 16:16,18, the hewers of wood of 1 Kgs. 5:6, the architects of 2 Chron 2:6, the craftsmen of 2 Chron 2:7.

In Isa 7:15,16, the verb is used to convey the ability to distinguish between good and evil. The best examples of this use are found in 1 Kgs 3:9 where it refers to Solomon and in 2 Sam 19:35 where it refers to Barzillai. Other examples are found in Deut 1:39; 1 Kgs 3:7; Jer 4:22.

The verb ידע and the noun דעת appear very frequently in wisdom literature. In Proverbs, the noun דעת occurs with חכמה 40 times in situations where they are interchangeable. Botterweck [466] points out that there are two different meanings attached to דעת in Proverbs, reflecting the two different sections of the book, the earlier section (Proverbs 10-29) and the later section (Proverbs 1-9). The first section is dominated by the antithetical parallelism of the sage and the fool. Here the noun דעת is that which characterizes the wise חכמים in 10:14; 15:2,7; the righteous צדקים in 11:9; 29:7; the prudent ערום in 13:16 and those with understanding נבון in 14:6; 15:14; 18:15. It is said that דעת is easy for those of understanding in 14:6. The prudent are crowned with



it in 14:18. Those who love discipline or instruction love רַעַת (see 12:1, 19:27, 23:12). When those of understanding are reproved or instructed they gain knowledge (19:2; 21:11).

In the later section of the Book of Proverbs (1-9), רַעַת is associated more closely with Yahweh. In 2:6, it is Yahweh who gives wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Those who accept his help gain wisdom and knowledge (2:10). Through the wisdom and knowledge of Yahweh the earth and the heavens were founded (3:19). In 1:7,

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

The fear of the Lord is synonymous with knowledge in 1:29; 2:5. In 2:5-6; 9:10, knowledge is associated with wisdom and understanding. In all these texts, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, fear of the Lord reflect a fundamental religious attitude.

Elsewhere in wisdom literature, רַעַת features prominently in Qoheleth where רַעַת וְחִכְמָה occurs together 7 times. In Sirach, יָדַע occurs 29 times and רַעַת 9 times.

Of the nine times where the word רַעַת appears in Isaiah (5:13; 11:2; 33:6; 40:14; 44:19,25; 47:10; 53:11; 58:2), six occurrences resemble the use of the word in wisdom literature. These texts are: 11:2; 33:6; 40:14; 44:19,25; 47:10:

- (a) Isa 11:2: רַעַת is parallel to יִרְאֵת יְהוָה as in Prov 1:7. Other words support the wisdom context, e.g. חִכְמָה, בִּינָה, עֵצָה.
- (b) Isa 33:6: Again רַעַת is parallel to יִרְאֵת יְהוָה. חִכְמָה occurs within the verse also.

- (c) Isa 40:14: The phrase in which ידע occurs is absent in the LXX. In the MT, ידע is parallel to תבונות. Isa 40:14 has two close parallels in wisdom literature, Job 21:22 and Ps 94:10. The former text in particular echoes Isa 40:14 in theme and vocabulary:

<u>Isa 40:14</u>	<u>Job 21:22</u>	<u>Ps 94:10</u>
וילמדו דעת	האל ילמד דעת	המלמד אדם דעת

- (d) Isa 44:19: ידע is parallel to תבונה. The context concerns the contrast between the power of God and the futility of idols.
- (e) Isa 44:25: ידע is associated with the חכמים. The rest of the vocabulary supports the wisdom character of the verse, e.g. ישכל, קסמים יהולל.
- (f) Isa 47:10: ידע is parallel to חכמה. Unlike the previous 5 texts, Isa 47:10 reflects the use of wisdom and knowledge in a negative sense. In vocabulary and theme, the verse is similar to Isa 29:14f.
- Two further uses of the noun ידע are found in Isa 53:11 and 58:2. The association of ידע and צדק in 53:11 is reminiscent of Prov 11:9; 29:7. Isa 58:2 can be contrasted with Job 21:14; in the former, the people delight to know God's ways but in the latter, the reverse is true:

<u>Isa 58:2</u>	<u>Job 21:14</u>
ורעת דרכי יחפצון	ורעת דרכין לא חפצנו

- (g) Isa 5:13: V13a states that the reason for going into exile is מבלי-רעת. The verse is introduced by כִּי which makes it, in its immediate context, the logical conclusion to v12. Verse 13 contains the threat of the woe oracle 5:11-17. However, v13 is more closely connected to v12b than it is to the theme of drunkenness in v11-12a. The lack of knowledge of the people is a consequence of their not looking closely at the work and deeds of Yahweh (v12). The phrase מבלי-רעת occurs in Deut 4:42; 19:14; Josh 20:3,5, with the meaning "unintentionally". The only other text where the phrase appears is Hos 4:6 where lack of knowledge is associated, not with the work and deeds of Yahweh as in Isaiah, but with neglecting the Torah. This, together with the fact that the phrase רעת יהוה (Hos 4:1, 6:6) does not occur in Isaiah, is a warning not to associate Isa 5:13 and Hos 4:6 too closely. Perhaps Isa 5:12-13 can be compared to those texts in Second Isaiah which begin with the phrase יָרַע כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה. This formula normally has a short historical reference. In Deut 29:2-3, Moses complains that in spite of all God's actions, the people still do not know. In Isa 5:12-13, the people are punished by exile because they did not look closely at the work and deeds of Yahweh.

The word רָעָה, similar in form and meaning to רָעָה, occurs 4 times in the OT in Ps 73:11; Isa 11:9; 28:9; Jer 3:15. It is a nominalized qal infinitive construct, feminine form, with the meaning "knowledge".

- (a) Isa 11:9: The phrase רָעָה אֶת-יְהוָה signifies the gift of God in a future ideal age. It is not the same phrase as Hosea's רָעַת-אֱלֹהִים and neither does it share the same negative context. Its natural connection lies with the characteristic of the ideal leader in 11:2 (רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה).
- (b) Isa 28:9: The noun רָעָה is parallel to שְׁמוּעָה. (The other parallel that exists in v9a, יוֹרָה, יִבִּין is often found in wisdom literature). V9a is a rhetorical question to which v9b corresponds. It is clearly ironic. The knowledge and message of v9a are of considerable importance - too important and serious to be entrusted to little children in v9b. The importance and seriousness of the knowledge and message in v 9 is indicated by the *reprise* of the word in v19, where it will be sheer terror to understand the message. This knowledge and message are spelled out in the threats of destruction contained in the unit v9-19.
- (c) Jer 3:15: רָעָה is parallel to בִּינָה. Both nouns refer to the knowledge and understanding that will be given to the shepherds who will teach the people to do the will of Yahweh. The verse is in direct contrast to Isa 56:11b where it is stated that the shepherds "do not have understanding".
- (d) Ps 73:11: The use of רָעָה reflects the use of רָעַת in Job 21:22; Ps 94:10. In Ps 73:11 the wicked are sceptical that God can know their deeds:

"How can God know?

Is there knowledge (רָעָה) in the Most High?"

No relevant connections can be made between the four uses of יָדַעַ in the OT apart from the fact that in Ps 73:11 and Isa 11:2 it is Yahweh who possesses knowledge as in Isa 28:9.

Botterweck [479] notes that the plural of יָדַעַ is found in 1 Sam 2:3 and Job 36:4 where it refers to the fulness of knowledge of Yahweh and Elihu respectively. A corresponding noun יָדַעַ is found in Job 32:6,10,17; 36:3; 37:16. Its use is restricted to the speeches of Elihu. In these texts, יָדַעַ is superior to יָדַעַת.

Another group of texts where the verb יָדַעַ occurs is found in Second Isaiah. These are the texts which have the formula

יָדַעַ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה

or a variation of this formula: 43:10; 45:3f; 49:23,26; 52:6; 60:16. Two texts from First Isaiah share the same theme: 19:21; 37:20. The formula normally constitutes the end of the oracle and is preceded by an account of or reference to God's action in history. Of the 947 occurrences of יָדַעַ it is used 71 times in this formula in Ezekiel alone. In Isa 43:10; 45:3; 49:23,26; 52:6, the objective clause יָדַעַ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה is expanded by means of a relative clause. Within a great oracle addressed to Cyrus (45:1-7) Yahweh promises to give him hidden treasures and secret hordes:

"that you may know that I am Yahweh who called you by your name."

The promise of Yahweh to the exiles climaxes in a recognition statement in 49:23:

"then you shall know that I am Yahweh: those who trust in me shall not be put to shame."

In Yahweh's victory over the enemy, all flesh recognize and know Yahweh as Saviour (49:26; 60:16).

The verb in the negative (לֹא יָדַע) which occurs in Isa 1:3, elsewhere expresses apostasy and religious decline. It refers to the wicked in Job 18:21. In Hos 4:1 lack of knowledge is associated with a lack of faithfulness and kindness. In Jer 9:1-3, a whole series of sins result from the fact that the people do not know Yahweh. In 1 Sam 2:20, the sons of Eli are worthless men because they do not know Yahweh and in Jer 2:8, it is the priests and those who transmit the Law that do not know him. In Isa 1:3, לֹא יָדַע is parallel to לֹא הִתְבּוֹנֵן. In its immediate context "not knowing" refers to the people's rebellion against Yahweh (v2) and to the way in which they despise him (v4).

In Isa 9:7, some commentators think that יָדַע should be emended: Vermeylen [1977: 177], for example, opts for the variant in 1QIsa יָרִיעוּ, meaning "they trembled". The matter is further complicated by the fact that the present v7-20 have been displaced. One observation, however, might be made; the plan of the people in their pride and arrogance (v8b-9) will be overturned by the plan of Yahweh (v10-11). This theme is introduced by v7-8a: the word of Yahweh which always effects what it promises (see Isa 55:10) will bring this process about. "All the people will know" the work of Yahweh (see Isa 5:18f for a similar theme).

### Summary:

The verb יָדַע or its derivatives occur 68 times in the Book of Isaiah: 23 times in First Isaiah and 45 times in Second Isaiah.

In Second Isaiah, the verb has the basic meaning "to know" in 48:4; 53:3; 55:5; 56:11; 58:2; 59:8; 61:9; 64:2. It is part of the formula

ידע כי אני יהוה

in 41:20-26; 43:10; 45:3-6; 49:23,26; 52:6; 60:16. A similar use is found in 66:14. It is found associated with wisdom ideas in 40:13-14; 44:25; 47:10,11,13; 53:11. It is contrasted with the foolishness of the idols in 44:9,18,19; 45:20. It occurs in contexts which are concerned with a sudden reversal of fortunes in 42:16; 43:19; 48:6,8.

In First Isaiah, the verb has the basic meaning "to know" in 8:4; 7:15-16; 29:12; 33:13; 37:28; 38:19. There are three instances where the verb occurs in a context similar to those in Second Isaiah which begin with

ידע כי אני יהוה

These texts are 12:5; 19:20-21; 37:20.

It is associated with wisdom vocabulary in 5:19; 11:2; 19:12; 29:15,24; 32:4; 33:6. Three further texts, 1:3; 9:8; 28:9 can be included under this general heading in that they occur in contexts where the plan of God is opposed by the plan of man. In 1:2c, the people rebel against God; 9:9 describes their plans to rebuild against God's wishes; 28:9-19 describes the conflict between God and his people. In the last case, the section 28:9-19 is followed by two wisdom parables vv23-29 to round off the section.

The noun רעת in 5:13 may also be classified along with the wisdom

texts. The wider context, 5:8-23 and 10:1-4, is concerned with the plans of God and men and describes the ironic fate of those who make fun of God's plan (v19) and feel they are wiser (v21). They end up by going into exile due to the inferiority of their own knowledge. In its immediate context, v13 is linked to v12b - the people go into exile because they have failed to examine closely the deeds and work of Yahweh.

Isa 6:9-10: This text in First Isaiah is particularly important because it announces Isaiah's commission. In v9, the two verbs עָרַ' and בִּין are parallel. Outside of Isaiah, it is in wisdom literature where they are most often found parallel (Job 14:21; 15:9; Ps 82:5; Prov 2:5; 19:25; 24:12). The verbs are also found parallel in Micah 4:12 where

"The nations do not know the thoughts of the Lord nor understand his plan."

Within Isaiah the two verbs are found parallel in 1:3; 11:2; 28:9; 29:24; 32:4; 40:14; 43:10; 44:18; 56:10,11. Five of these texts have wisdom characteristics: 1:3; 11:2; 29:24; 32:4; 40:14.

The verb עָרַ' separately, without the verb בִּין, is found in a wisdom context in 3:3; 5:21; 10:13; 29:16. The verb בִּין, without the verb עָרַ', is found in a wisdom context in 5:19; 11:9; 19:2.

With regard to the form תְּבִינוּ in 6:9: the only other occurrence of this form is in Job 18:2. The form תְּרַעַן occurs mostly in the Deuteronomic and historical literature: Deut 29:5; Josh 3:4; 23:13; 2 Sam 3:38; Jer 26:15; 42:19,22; 44:29.



The verb ץׁ in 6:10 is opposite in meaning in this context to ץׁ. The verb is only found in four other texts: Deut 32:15 (twice); Neh 9:25; Jer 5:28. In all four texts, it is used in a figurative sense; it signals the forsaking of or rebelling against Yahweh.

Most commentators suggest that the meaning of 6:9-10 is only understood as it is worked out in chs 7-8. From a linguistic point of view, however, one can relate the two verbs "knowing" and "understanding" which lie at the core of Isaiah's commission to their use elsewhere in the book of Isaiah in wisdom contexts and to the theme of knowing and understanding the plan of Yahweh.

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